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THE HUNTING AND SPORTING REMINISCENCES OF H. W. SELBY LOWNDES, M.F.H.

H. W. SELBY LOWNDES, ESQ., M.F.H.

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INTRODUCTION

THE following pages deal with the outstanding chapters in the long and varied sporting career of Mr. Henry W. Selby Lowndes, for over a quarter of a century Master of the East Kent Hunt. The name of Selby Lowndes has been inseparably connected with the annals of the chase for over a century and a half, the inherent love of horse and hound, together with that of the essential good fellowship both engender, having been passed on from father to son as a birthright with undiminished, nay increasing, affection and enthusiasm. There are other families which have as long and as brilliant a record of service as Masters of Hounds, but they could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Probably when Mr. William Selby Lowndes was at the head of the old family pack—the Whaddon Chase—a record was established, for his three brothers, Richard, Cyril, and the subject of this book (Mr. Henry Selby Lowndes), were all Masters of Hounds.

They began in a good school, for their father, the late Squire of Whaddon Hall, Bletchley, was a great sportsman, an acknowledged authority on everything connected with venery, the economy of kennels and stables, and the administration of a hunting country. He was Master of the North Warwickshire from 1853 to 1855; of the Atherstone from 1855 to

1859; and then of the Whaddon Chase till succeeded by his eldest son. The old Squire died as recently as November 3rd, 1920, having nearly reached his eighty-fifth year. After the body of this great M.F.H. and father of Hunt Masters had been laid to rest, hounds filed past his grave in accordance with one of his last wishes. So was it that to the very end he was with hounds. The old Squire shared with Whyte-Melville a deep-rooted hatred of barbed wire, the use of which he looked upon as an unpardonable offence against the best traditions of rural England and the sport which has helped to lay the foundation of those traditions, as well as to build up the robust character of the nation. He used to say he was glad he "had hunted when hunting was a pleasure." He was impatient of many later-day innovations, and it was his boast that during his long control of the Whaddon Chase he had never had an unpleasant word with a single farmer.

Such, then, was the early mentor of the subject of this book; such, then, the sporting school in which he and his brothers were educated in matters connected with hounds, hunting, kennel management, and horse-mastership. They could hardly have had a better tutor or an environment more conducive to fit them for the part they were to play in the world of sport. All their natural instincts were encouraged, directed and developed, and that which was bred in the bone has borne abundant fruit in the flesh.

Born on February 27th, 1873, Mr. Henry Selby Lowndes has played the sporting game pretty well all

round. He has played it hard and played it well from, and including, the days when he was graduating and serving his novitiate as a very youthful Master of Harriers. After this he hunted a 'bobbery' pack in the Argentine, had much varied experience with men, horses and cattle when ranching there, broadening his views on life and enjoying the rough with the smooth. But there was a loadstone away back in old England which was continually drawing him and which finally brought him back to follow in the footsteps of his forebears as a Master of Hounds. In these days of short masterships he now ranks as one of the veterans in office. There are a few, but only a few, whose record is equal to his own, as the following list will show:

Mr. Jacob Robson, Border Master and Huntsman since 1879.

Mr. Lewis Priestman, Braes of Derwent M.F.H. since 1896.

Major W. W. Wilson, Barlow M.F.H. since 1900.

The Earl of Yarborough, Brocklesby M.F.H. since 1880.

Rev. E. A. Milne, Cattistock M.F.H. since 1900.

Col. W. H. A. Wharton, Cleveland M.F.H. 1886–1919 (now Jt.-M.F.H.).

Mr. E. Curre, Master of Mr. Curre's since 1896.

Lord Henry Nevill, Master of Eridge since 1893.

Mr. G. C. W. Fitzwilliam, Master of Fitzwilliam since 1887.

Mr. H. W. Selby Lowndes, Master of East Kent since 1900.

Mr. E. E. Barclay, Master of the Puckeridge since 1896.

Sir F. Villiers Forster, Master of South Staffordshire since 1885.

Mr. John C. Straker, Master of Tynedale since 1883.

The Earl of Bathurst, Master of the V.W.H. (Cirencester) since 1892.

Sir W. Williams-Wynn, Bart., Master since 1885.

Those are the only English Masters of Hounds still remaining in office with a quarter of a century's record to their credit. Short as the list is, it is probable that as the sportsmen whose names are tabulated drop out the total will never again be reached.

That Mr. Henry Selby Lowndes has been a successful M.F.H. the following pages abundantly show. By 'successful' one means more than that he has shown good sport, that he has built up a first-rate pack of hounds, that he has killed foxes and hunted the country to the satisfaction of the landowners, farmers and supporters. In addition to all this, he has made the sport and himself, hounds and foxes popular with all classes. That is the supreme test of a Master's success in his office, and it is more important to-day than ever it was. This has been accomplished in East Kent, not merely by making sport one of the main concerns as well as the greatest pleasure in life—a study as well as a recreation—but mainly by intense keenness

and enthusiasm, by his *savoir-faire*, and by 'nursing' the country in season and out of season. The Master's passion for the chase, together with his horsemanship and that genial *camaraderie* characteristic of a sportsman at heart, soon won the hearts of the East Kent Nimrods and non-hunting farmers as it had done those in Yorkshire, where I first met the M.F.H. in the days when all the trees were green and all the world was young. Time sits lightly on his shoulders; he still goes as straight to hounds as ever he did; his keenness is the same, and, even though every reader of this book may not agree with all the views expressed —those on hound-shows, for instance—it will be generally conceded that Harry Selby Lowndes belongs to a type of which we seem (more's the pity) to have lost the mould nowadays. He has well maintained the reputation of his ancient family, and has added honourable chapters to a long and honourable history. His name will live in the annals of sport long after his own age and generation. The reason is not far to find. From beginning to end his career in the world of sport has been stamped with that hall-mark of reality, sincerity, continuity and truth which alone can withstand the refiner's fire and the too often acid test of time.

J. F.-B.

CHAPTER I

THE SELBY LOWNDES FAMILY

ALTHOUGH this is primarily and essentially the story of the life of Mr. Henry W. Selby Lowndes, M.F.H. (hereafter alluded to as 'The Master'), a few words as to 'how he is bred' will not be out of place at the outset, for they help to explain much of his inherent passion for horse and hound and all those recreations which the old-time squirearchy did so much to foster.

The name of Selby Lowndes is both ancient and historic, and there is no doubt that the house of Lowndes has a lawful right to the title of Baron Montacute, though this has never been laid claim to.

The family of Lowndes was formerly located at Leigh Hay, in Cheshire, and in bygone days was prominent in politics. One William Lowndes, who flourished in the reign of Queen Anne, rendered such service to the county in the House of Commons, when Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, that Queen Anne appointed him by special grant Auditor of the Land Revenues for life, with reversion to his heirs, and an augmentation to his coat-of-arms.

In the church registers at Winslow, in Buckinghamshire, may be seen to this day records of

marriages of the ancestors of the Lowndes family dating as far back as the year 1560.

The family pack of hounds (the Whaddon Chase) was one of the oldest in the kingdom, having been in the family nearly a century and a quarter. It was originally formed to satisfy the deep-seated love of the chase which has ever been prominent in successive generations of the Lowndes family, and also to provide their friends, neighbours and tenants with sport. Until 1923 matters went along happily enough on these lines, and then old links and old traditions were rudely and unhappily broken. It would serve no good purpose here, nor is it germane to the story, to open old sores and relate an unsavoury story which had as its sequence the ultimate end of a long and honourable reign of Mastership when Mr. W. Selby Lowndes gave up the country. It had been his and his forebears', and might have passed on as a family legacy. In the cause of peace and sport, however, he relinquished his birthright, to the deep regret of many who really mattered.

The grandfather of the subject of these memoirs was described by *The Field*, at his death, as having 'given up the whole of his long life to the chase.' He was born on the 5th of November, 1807, and with the possible exception of the late Mr. Meynell Ingram, he made far greater sacrifices for the chase than most other men.

To refer again to *The Field obit* notice: 'It may truly be said of the late Mr. Lowndes that he came into

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THE FOUNDER OF THE WHADDON CHASE.

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the world to send foxes out of it, and, like many others since his day, he learnt the early lessons of his craft while carrying the horn with the Eton beagles, where he was entered to hunt almost as early as to Horace and Virgil.'

The beagles were in due course replaced by harriers, and after leaving Eton and settling down at Whaddon Hall, he started eighteen couple of bloodhounds, with which he hunted the deer in the Chase and became the terror of the sheep-stealers in the neighbourhood.

The ten thousand acres of Chase were then unenclosed; the steam plough was yet in the mind of the inventor, the drainpipe (hated by Will Danby, of Holderness and Hurworth fame) was lying in its original clay, Bletchley Junction had not come into being, and the Vale and surroundings were a perfect paradise for sport. Winslow was a flourishing coaching and hunting centre. Game-cocks strutted in the market square, and were bred at every tenant's farmhouse. Over this locality, pregnant with sporting tradition, the Squire of Whaddon was as much a king as any lord of feudal times.

Such were the days, and such the sporting atmosphere, for the fifty years Harry Lowndes' grandfather was Master of the family pack.

The bloodhounds referred to, which the old Squire hunted during the early part of his long years of Mastership, were, as already hinted, used constantly to hunt sheep-stealers. On one occasion a deer was killed by poachers; the bloodhounds were laid on at the kill,

and hunted seven or eight miles up to a cottage door. The place was searched, and the venison found, but the birds had flown. The hounds were laid on the trail again, and hunted another mile, to a straw stack, in which the culprits were found hiding amongst the straw. They were seized and transported for life.

The late Squire of Whaddon was the recipient of many testimonials of affectionate regard and gratitude for the sport he showed during his long reign, both from farmers and members of the hunt. Some of these took the form of pictures of himself and his hounds, in oils ; and others, silver plate and hunting-horns.

The celebrated George Carter, so many years huntsman to the Fitzwilliam, started life with the Squire as whipper-in, and—like the renowned Mr. Jorrocks did with 'Benjamin'—the Squire endeavoured to instil enthusiasm into him with his whip when not up in time for cubbing. Either tiring of this, or acquiring the necessary keenness, Carter took to going to bed in his hunting kit, spurs and all, the night before, much to the disgust of the page-boy with whom he shared a bed. One night he let the latchfords into the boy so often in his sleep, that the latter ever afterwards curled himself up on the floor in a blanket on hunting nights.

George Carter had much of the old Adam in him, and was continually getting himself into some scrape or other. On one occasion the cook reported him and the page-boy, whose name was White, for singeing off the cat's whiskers, for which each received a

double thonging. Carter and White swore vengeance, and actually laid a train of gunpowder up to the kitchen range, intending to blow up the cook. Fortunately for her, she happened to be in the larder when she heard an awful explosion, and rushing into the kitchen, found the range half blown away. There was a very large dinner-party at the Hall that night, including such sporting celebrities as the late Lord William Beresford, Lord Combermere, and Sir Watkin Wynn, all of the 1st Life Guards, the officers of which crack regiment all had the *entré* into the Squire's house, and regularly enjoyed the sport he showed and hospitality he so loved to give. On this particular occasion, however, the dinner-party was a failure !

George Carter used to love to meet the page-boy White in after-years, in their old age, when many early reminiscences and incidents were recalled. Carter for long judged every year at the Whaddon Puppy Show, and his old friend White was always asked to meet him, together with many other noted huntsmen, including Fred Cox, Nimrod Long, and Bob Warrell.

After Carter gave up hunting the Fitzwilliam hounds the old fellow could not bear to meet his old pack, and when they happened to pass his cottage he always pulled the blinds down. He once remarked that he would like to have the Fitzwilliam hounds valued at the time he retired, and again in twenty years. His words were not without significance, as the pack went steadily downhill, and remained so for years, until the late Mr. C. B. Wright's

judgment and endless pains restored them to their old status. George Carter's will was proved at £18,000—not bad for a hunt servant! He left the present Mr. W. Selby Lowndes some of his pictures and his silver hunting-horns.

The late Mr. William Selby Lowndes, when High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, kept his pack kennelled close to the Assize Hall. Once, during the arguing of a dry point of *nisi prius* law by the leaders of the circuit, they set up such a chorus as to drown the voices of the counsel engaged in the case, and a javelin man, opening a window, shouted 'Silence!' to them.

Now Silence happened at this time to be Mr. Lowndes' favourite hound, and, though sitting by the side of the judge, he could not refrain from saying quite audibly: "'Silence,' indeed! When she throws her tongue once on the line all the law and court officials in the world couldn't stop her."

The late Squire was the only M.F.H. of his day who hunted on Ash Wednesday. In other respects, too, he had the utmost disregard of what the world thought orthodox. He had five brothers, all of whom took to the chase naturally and followed the family pack. They were all known as excellent shots too, and from September 1st onwards rose at five in the morning and shot and walked all day, with only a break for lunch, consisting of small beer and sandwiches and bread and cheese.

The old Squire died in his armchair at the ripe age of eighty, but so long as hunting continues, and

Christmas Gorse and High Havens remain names to conjure with and make the pulse beat faster, so long will his memory continue in the Vale as a great Nimrod and a great-hearted gentleman, 'one of the olden time.'

He was succeeded by his son (the father of the subject of these memoirs), who held the Mastership for thirty years, and resigned in his turn, through old age, to his eldest son, William. Before retiring he was presented with a quantity of plate and a cheque by the members and farmers. He was a noted whip, a fine shot, and a great admirer of good boxing, attending many prize-fights in his early days. His brothers Fleetwood, Beresford and Octavius were all devoted to hunting, and spent most of their time shooting and hunting over the Whaddon estates.

It may here be interesting to note that all his four sons, William, Harry, Dick and Cyril, all became Masters of Hounds, hunting the Whaddon Chase, East Kent, Burstow and North Bucks Harriers respectively. This perhaps creates a record unprecedented in hunting annals, and is yet every way in keeping with the traditions and characteristics of the family. No better instance of heredity, of like begetting like, of Mendelism and of love for sport being imbibed by children with their mother's milk, could be found than the Selby Lowndes family. This trait, predisposition, legacy—call it what you will—is still being handed on, for the youngsters of the house are every whit as keen as their fathers and those who have gone before them, making sporting history in each generation.

CHAPTER II

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

HENRY WILLIAM SELBY LOWNDES was born on the 27th of February, 1873. Born and bred in an atmosphere of sport, he has well maintained the traditions of the family.

It is on record that, even when a child in arms, he became excited at the sight of a horse or a dog, and when he came to walk he was never so happy as when in the stableyard among the horses and hound puppies walked by his father. It was not long before he became the happy owner of two terriers, which soon proved the terror of all stray cats in the vicinity. The neighbouring farmers not only encouraged him in his early sporting proclivities, but invited him to bring his terriers to rid them of their rats. He readily responded, and gave them some fun into the bargain. Harry Lowndes was blooded to hounds at the early age of four and a half, in the Wobourne Woods, by Tom Whitmore, the celebrated Oakley huntsman of that day, and during the Mastership of the still more celebrated Robert Arkwright. From that time forward his thoughts, conversation and inclinations were centred on the chase. Whenever allowed to leave his books he hunted with the

Oakley and Mr. Carpenter's Harriers, and began to get his hand in by hunting a couple of Oakley hound puppies and a terrier or two after anything he could find to stand up in front of his mixed pack. His first blood was a leveret, the remains of which he hastily deposited in his sister's governess's umbrella, to hide them from the irate farmer in whose standing corn the kill had taken place.

At the age of nine he was sent to Farnborough School, Hants (a preparatory school for Eton), under the mastership of the well-known Mr. Morton. In those days, if a boy's head appeared to be too hard to comprehend or retain some crabbed line of Ovid, an endeavour was made to whack it into him at a more sensitive part of his anatomy. It was the late Mr. Lowndes' firm opinion, however, that if a boy is not well thrashed when at school, he will probably need it when he is a man, so that this system was fully in accordance with his own ideas.

Among the boys at Farnborough were the young Prince of Teck, the Marquis of Tullibardine, Lord Murray, Lord Cottenham, and two of the Queen's pages, namely, Ponsonby and Ellis. Harry Lowndes and his friends invariably kicked the two unfortunate pages after they returned from their regal duties, to prevent them, as they said, "from becoming too conceited." One of the twain—Ellis, to wit—and Harry Lowndes fought a great battle, the latter beating Ellis, but in his next encounter, he in turn was beaten by one Scott, who was two years his

senior, and a bigger boy. They were both severely punished in the fight, Harry losing two teeth, which he swallowed.

The Master, like many other sportsmen, was better at games than books, so that his visits to Mr. Morton's study were very regular, with the result that the forms used in the dining-room and class-rooms constantly appeared to him less comfortable than they really were, and he was thus, in a measure, prepared for long days in the saddle in the years to come. In games, however, he excelled. He was in the first eleven both at cricket and football, and he was pretty useful with his fists.

At this period his grandfather died, so that his father came into the estate and the Mastership of the family pack, though he did not take up his residence at the Hall for quite a year. Harry Lowndes, having suffered considerably from his throat, was ordered a complete change and as much outdoor life as possible. So that winter his father installed him at Whaddon Hall. The bailiff was told off to look after him out hunting and shooting, and the house-keeper in the house. His father gave him a pony and a gun, so with his terriers, spaniel and ferrets, he was quite in his element.

Old Bentley, huntsman to the family pack for thirty years, became his *fidus Achates*, the kennels his playground, and the hounds his playmates. He never missed an early morning exercise with Bentley and the pack before cubbing commenced, and took

the greatest interest in every branch of kennel and stable management, acquiring a knowledge which has stood him in good stead. The early-morning cubbing, the cry of the hounds as they rattled the cubs round the Whaddon woodlands, the honour of helping to supply the house with his gun—one can well imagine how all this suited the sporting instincts and tendencies of the youthful sportsman.

Few men have seen more fun with hounds than he has, yet these early days still rank as amongst his happiest memories; as the poet has it:

> Treat children's sport with laughter,
> Or, if you will, with tears.
> Such joys come not hereafter,
> Through all our later years.
> We scarcely now can measure,
> By backward cast of thought,
> The ecstasy of pleasure
> Crushed from the lees of sport.

His great ambition was to start a pack of harriers; so his next move, after consulting his father, was to open a subscription towards procuring a few 'Jelly dogs,' to which all the servants in the house and his father's friends who came to the Hall subscribed. Thuswise he soon had funds sufficient to make a start. His father gave him six couple of beautiful little dwarf foxhound bitches, and with five more couple of old harriers, bought from the late Mr. Milne at a very nominal price, he found himself Master of a pack of eleven couples all told. With a beautiful

country, plenty of hares, and the farmers to a man giving them a hearty welcome, a start was made under very bright auspices on the 10th of September, 1886, when he was in his thirteenth year.

The following is an account of the first day's sport from the young Master's diary:

Met at Brett's farm, several farmers out, my uncle, the blacksmith, and the grocer.

Drew the fields in front of the farmhouse; found at once, and ran to Beachampton and on to Calverton, back to Brett's farm, where we checked; but old Talisman hit her off, and away they went, streaming across the large grass fields to the Stratford road, checking here. She had run the road but squatted in the ditch. Putting her out, we raced her in view across three fields and killed her.

The most enjoyable day of my life. Blooded myself well, and went home happier than I ever felt before. My uncle sent me a hunting-horn the following day, with a very pleasing letter, which I shall value in remembrance of my first day as an M.H. as long as I live.

Many were the runs enjoyed in the Vale of Aylesbury during the four years Harry Lowndes hunted his harriers, with his two brothers as whips, riding anything, from an old sixteen-hand hunter down to a butcher's cob. The harriers made quite a name for themselves, whilst their youthful Master-huntsman showed early indication of skill and patience with hounds, resourcefulness, and the possession of any amount of 'hound talk.' The farmers all welcomed him wherever he went, and were keen on his meeting at their houses. Many of them hunted with him, and after the day's sport was over insisted

W. SELBY LOWNDES, W. SELBY LOWNDES, JUNR.,
AND THE REVD. OCTAVIUS SELBY LOWNDES.

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on the Master and his field partaking of their Buckinghamshire hospitality, which usually consisted of beer and pork pies.

Like the Handley Cross M.F.H., young Harry Lowndes not infrequently hunted in his sleep. One day his father and mother came to Whaddon for lunch, and ordered up a magnum of champagne. They only had a couple of glasses, however, the bottle being recorked and put in the sideboard. Directly they had gone Harry commandeered the bottle, and for several nights discussed the contents for supper in the housekeeper's room. Directly after the meal he invariably went to sleep full length on the floor in front of the fire, and dreamed of the sport he so enjoyed. The old housekeeper used to say to him when he awoke :

" Oh, Master 'Arry, you have been a-carrying on, both legs and both arms going all the time ! Whatever have you been a-dreaming of ? "

The Whaddon Woods in those days abounded with rabbits, and as many as three or four hundred were killed in a day's shooting by Harry and his brothers, in addition to pheasants and other game. No one could set a snare better than the first mentioned, or run a hundred-yard rabbit-net quicker along a wood, and sometimes the number of rabbits caught in one evening with the long net was simply enormous.

Whaddon Park contained a considerable number of deer, which frequently escaped from the Park and took to the woodlands. With the aid of Mr. Fit (a

hunting correspondent of *The Field*), a few blood-hounds were collected and the deer hunted, many a fine run, in which Harry participated, being enjoyed. In addition, H. W. S. L. and his brothers also used to ride the fawns down on horseback in the Park, and shoot them when the number had to be reduced.

Harry Lowndes and his two younger brothers were typical high-spirited, robust, merry English boys, full of fun and devilment, but having transgressed rather more than usual during one holiday (either by drinking small beer and smoking churchwardens at Mr. Curtis's farm, or making love to the head-keeper's daughter; whichever it was is immaterial), it was decided to introduce a tutor, who would give the young gentlemen two hours' lessons a day and have a hand on the curb rein. His reception at Bletchley Station was hardly likely to give him a very favourable impression of his future charges. The boys had been ordered by their father to meet him in the dog-cart, but when Mr. S—— arrived, he found an empty conveyance waiting, the horse being held by an out-porter. On asking who was to drive him, the man replied, "Oh! the young gentlemen are here to meet you; you will find them in the refreshment-room." Mr. S—— wended his way thither, and, sure enough, there were his prospective young pupils, drinking beer and chaffing the pretty barmaid, whose hair was much ruffled, consequent upon having been hunted round the bar and run to ground under the counter.

After Mr. S—— had refused an offer to join them in a glass of beer, they made a move and arrived at Whaddon without further mishap. During the first evening the tutor maintained that he heard more about horses and dogs than he had done in the whole of his previous existence. He also came to the conclusion that he had got a greater handful in his pupils than he had bargained for. After dinner, when the ladies had gone, it was the old Squire's delight to get his sons to play the banjo and sing hunting and comic songs, of which they had a rare collection. Between the songs the conversation always turned to hunting, and generally ended in a furious wrangle as to their respective prowess in the hunting-field. Each youth was jealous of his reputation and the capabilities of his hunter; for is it not written, 'It is better to impugn a man's morals than his horsemanship'? The Squire encouraged them, getting a lot of amusement out of their arguments, until matters reached a high pitch, when he intervened. 'John Peel' ended the evening, and the pupils retired to the pantry for a nightcap of sherry.

Mr. S—— awoke the next morning with a desperate headache, not being accustomed to wine, which had been rather unduly pressed upon him. The sound of a hunting-horn in the passage, and a series of view-holloas, however, forcibly reminded him of his new position. During the day he was introduced to the kennels, and gained some insight into the daily routine of a pack of fox-hounds in the

summer months. After getting his best clothes besmeared with not altogether savoury hound-food during feeding-time, he was invited to hunt rats in the slaughter-house, but at this latter proposal he jibbed, and decided to return to the Hall alone. Unfortunately, he passed through the bitches' and whelps' yard, and old Rhapsody, taking exception to his unwarrantable intrusion, promptly resented it by seizing him.

The usual complaint was made at tea by the young ladies that their brothers smelt strongly of the kennels; and that night there was a great uproar, when the tutor retired to his room and found a muzzled ferret (which he dare not for the life of him touch) curled up in his bed.

The following Sunday there was another contre-temps. Richard could not say his Collect, and Mr. S—— endeavoured to assert his authority, at which the brothers showed fight, and eventually threw him out of the window—fortunately ground-floor. This incident nearly ended in serious trouble, but thanks to the intervention of one of the boys' sisters, Mr. S—— forgave and forgot; and pretending they wished to placate him, the boys insisted on the tutor being taken out partridge-shooting on the first of September. In tight boots and trousers, he tramped with the guns from half-past nine in the morning until dark, with only a break at one o'clock for a lunch of sandwiches and beer. At half-past five a call was made at a sporting parson's

house, and a request made for some beer. Trinity audit was forthcoming, so it was real 'old October,' and Mr. S—— declared that a large wineglass of it made him 'happy,' but the brothers put it away like small beer, and shot on afterwards till dark. It may be noted here that in those days Harry Lowndes and his three brothers always loaded their own cartridges, and after use recapped and loaded them again for a future occasion.

Mr. S——'s sojourn at Whaddon came to a sudden end consequent upon the following incident. His pupils, during the Squire's absence, laid a drag over Charlie Thompson's (*alias* 'Bounsty Bob's') training steeplechase course, and rode what they could get out of the stables, incidentally laming one or two horses. The tutor was blamed for not having prevented this escapade, and departed, the boys being sent back to school the following morning.

Before the tutor left, their mother inquired as to the state of her sons' morals. "Madam," replied Mr. S——, "why, they have not a moral among them."

Once Harry's mother was endeavouring to impress upon them the excellence of truth, honesty and charity, together with other good qualities which are more precious than rubies, and very much scarcer. She went on to say that in Heaven one received the reward of a virtuous life. "Heaven!" said Harry, pondering. "Are there any horses there?" "No, dear," was the reply.

"Then," exclaimed Harry, "I don't want to go there."

Alfred Stoddart, by the way, pictured Heaven as Harry Lowndes would have had it at this early age, and maybe as he would still have it—

And I sometimes think that Heaven is a green and boarded field,
Where the turf is ever springy, and our muscles never yield—
Where the eyesight grows no dimmer, nor the ponies e'er go lame,
And where all good polo players evermore play the game.

Harry and his brothers were fond of fishing, and many is the day they spent on the river at their cousins', the Knapps, of Linford Hall, trolling for pike or fishing the ponds for roach and perch.

They were also keen on badger-hunting, but a dig with the terriers had to be indulged in unbeknown to their father, as the sport was forbidden by him, since he liked to have badgers about the estate.

R. SELBY LOWNDES, ESQ., M.F.H.

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CHAPTER III

LIFE IN THE ARGENTINE

WHEN Henry Selby Lowndes was seventeen years of age, he left school, and was approached by his father as to his future. Learning that two of his friends were going out to South America, cattle- and horse-ranching, he made up his mind to accompany them. The open, free life appealed to him, and everything was quickly arranged. In March 1890, after one of the best season's hunting the Whaddon Chase ever had, and excellent sport with his harriers (which he sold to the Comte de Paris, of Stow Park), he sailed from Southampton for Buenos Ayres. His two friends, H. and L. Bury, went with him, all bound for an *estancia* of 80,000 acres owned by the Traill brothers, who were Irishmen.

The following are extracts from his diary relating to the voyage:

March 20th.—Sailed by the Lambert & Holt Line. There were a great number of passengers, amongst whom were several girls going out with their *trousseaux* to be married. One girl fell in love with the doctor on board, and another had hysterics on arriving at Montevideo at meeting her intended, a little, plain, pot-bellied man twenty-five years her senior.

After three weeks' voyage we arrived at Montevideo, where

we were detained by an awful storm which lasted two days. We ran into another boat, and made a hole in her above water-mark with no serious result. Arriving at Buenos Ayres, we had great trouble; neither my friends nor myself being able to speak Spanish. The Custom House and out-porters, etc., all tried to best us. However, after two days and a night in the train we arrived at our destination in the province of Santa Fé.

The *estancia* was divided into two ranches of about 40,000 acres each. The two brothers Traill lived five miles apart, and each managed his own ranch. The country was flat, with very few trees, excepting peach-trees, which were abundant just round the *estancia* itself. The stock consisted of 2,000 horses and 12,000 head of cattle. There were about six or seven young fellows, and four young Traills, some living with one brother, and the rest with the other. There were also three pretty daughters, who were much sought after, and who could all ride better than most men. Forty or more native peons, a cross between a low-class Spaniard and an Indian, the worst breed conceivable, and a queer lot to deal with, were employed.

Harry Lowndes and his friends were not long in picking up the language, and within three months were all three earning good wages.

The Master, with the sporting instincts with which Nature had so freely endowed him, very soon discovered there were foxes in the vicinity. As soon as he was settled in his new surroundings, he began furiously to think how to muster a pack to

hunt them. Such a thing as a pack of foxhounds had never been heard of in that country. As there were no available means of procuring the real article, Harry adopted the only possible course, and collected together all the cur dogs in the neighbourhood. His bobbery pack consisted of some ten couples—collies, terriers, mongrels, lurchers and native dogs of all breeds. Sunday was the regular hunting day, supplemented by such week-days as could be stolen from work. Foxes (which were plentiful) were found in the tracts of long pampas grass. There being no coverts, earths were very numerous and hard to stop, so that foxes constantly ran to ground. They were easily dug out, however, and either killed or turned down again and hunted. They ran, as a rule, from one stretch of prairie grass to another, and the pack constantly got a view which helped sport considerably with such a miscellaneous lot of 'hounds.' In spite of the difficulties, the young huntsman was able to show a certain amount of sport, and killed a good few foxes; but hunting was necessarily only a side-issue.

There was plenty of work to do on the *estancia*. Harry and his companions were usually about by five in the morning, and caught their horses, which were driven up out of the camp every morning into a corral. They then rode round different parts of the ranch, which was divided into four large *protraros* and two big camps. In the large camps the wild mares and native stallions ran free; but

in the *protraros* a picked number of mares were kept, one for a Shire stallion and the others for a Thoroughbred, both purchased from England.

With the exception of an hour or two in the middle of the day, when the heat was too severe to work, they were on horseback all day long. There was great fun and not a little excitement when the buyers came. They would ride in amongst a mob of some 10,000 head of cattle, and choose the different beasts they required.

Parting wild cattle is not child's play, and requires good horsemanship, nerve and skill. Two sections were told off to ride out any beast selected by a buyer, three men in each section, who were relieved at intervals by others when their horses tired. The riding out of any picked animal was exciting. One man rode each side of him, and one behind, and rattled him along. The beast invariably tried to make a bolt into the camp, and then one of the men rode up to him just behind the shoulder, and his horse mobbed him, in the same way as one man rides another off the ball at polo. The greatest risk, when not accustomed to it, was that of being horned, which happened to many a novice's horse.

The cattle were ridden off in this fashion some five hundred yards to a herd of working bullocks, kept in readiness for the purpose. Some beasts were so wild that, when parted from the main body, nothing but the lasso and absolutely dragging them

to the tame bullocks was practicable. Though continued throughout the day without stopping for food, these occasions were much enjoyed.

The parting of cattle in this manner, the hard riding, the quick turning with every movement of the beast, have been found most useful in the making of polo ponies; hence those from the Argentine, when sent over to England, have always been found suitable for this purpose. They excel in rapidity in turning, answering to the leg and pulling up, though they are not nearly as fast as English ponies.

The Master and his friends took considerable pains to learn the use of the lasso, practising constantly, until they became quite experts. Great were the days when the round-up of all the cattle on the ranch arrived—drafting the young ones into corrals, branding them and cutting the young bulls. On these occasions the lasso was in use all day. The lassoing of a beast round his horns on horseback at full gallop needs practice, and still harder is it to lasso a beast by the forelegs and throw him down.

The new-comer to South America needs to be careful as to his claims regarding horsemanship. He will find, to his cost, the boys will take steps to test him and undeceive him as to his imagined prowess.

Harry Lowndes refers to buck-jumping in his diary thus:

We often used to drive up a batch of wild horses from the big camp, get them into a corral, lasso two or three of them, saddle them up with difficulty and mount them. Many the score we rode and many the falls we had. Real buck-jumpers and no mistake! None of your Buffalo Bill trick buck-jumpers, but real downright bucking in small circles with head between the forelegs; and I will frankly admit that I have never known or seen a man ride a real buck-jumper in an English saddle without being floored, and don't believe from my own experience it is possible. Straight bucks are no joke, but real bucking in small circles no man on an English saddle with the best grip and balance in the world can withstand long.

It was considered waste of time not to mount the colts straight away, and after being ridden half-a-dozen times they were handed in as broken-in horses. Certainly the men who had to ride them for a month after were perfect centaurs, and the horses came to understand and to delight in the work they were called upon to do. The first three or four days of the breaking, however, called for courage and the resolution and dare-devil of hard men.

Polo was played regularly on the *estancia*. Harry Lowndes had many good ponies, and gained the reputation of a wonderfully hard hitter with a fine eye. The North Santa Fé Polo Club was started by Mr. Kinchant, the young Traills, and himself. Since that time the Traills have made their name at polo, playing for Ireland; not only in the Argentine, but also in the May tournaments at Hurlingham and Ranelagh. One of them was invited by Lord Wimborne to join his team in 1914, to play in the international match *v.* America.

Harry Lowndes and the Traills thought nothing of riding a hundred miles, driving their polo ponies in front of them, cantering all the way, and playing

polo the following day. Indeed, there is no trotting with saddle-horses in South America. They are only taught to canter, and will go on at that pace interminably.

Another sport much enjoyed by Harry Lowndes and his friends was catching ostriches with the *boleadores*. Throwing the *boleadores* is an art not easily acquired, and it is seldom that an Englishman or a foreigner is able to handle them properly without considerable practice. But to all Englishmen who carry with them their fondness of outdoor exercise ostrich-hunting offers any amount of hard riding, and requires pluck and a good horse with speed and stamina. The *boleadores* are made with three balls of either stone or lead, covered with a layer of raw hide made pliable by soaking and hand-rubbing. One of the balls, attached to a strong strip of hide, is held in the hand. At about a yard's length the strip of hide divides into two strips, with the other two balls at either end.

There was no end of variety and spice of life. Sometimes they chased wild horses and caught them by the hind legs, but deer and ostrich were the chief sport, and found the most enjoyable. Shooting, too, was decidedly good. Deer, wild duck, snipe, partridge and a bird called the martinetta (like a hen pheasant with a top-knot) abounded. The martinetta- and partridge-shooting was all done over pointers, it being impossible to walk birds up in the thick and long grass. It was

not difficult to go out with three guns and kill forty to fifty brace of partridges any day. There was abundance of snipe and wild duck, the wild-duck shooting being extra good, with an occasional wild goose. Many were the jolly days Harry Lowndes enjoyed out shooting with the Traills, Burys, Hay and Foster. In their time (1890) there was not a hare to be found. Since then a few have been imported, the consequence being that the country is overrun with them, and they are nearly as rife as rabbits in Australia.

The following is an extract from the Master's diary at the period with which we are dealing :

We always killed our own meat, and proper rough stuff it was. We used to go out into the big camps, and were told to catch a certain old cow or beast, always a real thin devil. Away we went with our lassos, lassoed it, and killed and skinned it on the spot, cut it up, and used to have a joint that night, and real tough it was ! In fact, after you had chewed it up you were too tired to swallow it. Each nigger was allowed 5 lbs. of meat a day, and fifteen dollars a month wages. Horses were worth from twenty to thirty dollars each, and cattle from thirty to thirty-five. At that time a paper dollar was worth 1*s.* 10*d.*

Periodically we used to have a bust in Rosario and Buenos Ayres, and a rare go it was when we were once let loose. We made up for lost time and fairly woke them up. Buenos Ayres is a lively town and no mistake.

During the stay in the town there was invariably a good deal of racing on native ponies. Harry Lowndes took part in these, and won several races on his own and other people's horses. Native races

there are ridden bareback and are only over a short distance, and ridden right out from start to finish. The niggers stake everything they possess on their horses, and have often been known actually to wager and lose their shirts, and also their boots, on a race when cleaned out.

To return, however, after this digression, to life on the *estancia*. After he had been in the country four months the Master was left on a ranch seven miles from the nearest Englishman, and had a rough time. He was then sent four hundred miles up country with a friend to buy bullocks. They took three horses each and a guide, slept out at night, and cooked their own food. The farther north they travelled the wilder and less civilised the country became. The far district of forest was apparently the retreat of all the desperadoes in the country, and with some of them the Master and his companion fell foul. Lowndes and his partner slept but little at nights; to do so would have been absolutely fatal; they slept during the day and trekked at night. The native gaucho is, as a rule, a bit careful as to tackling an Englishman, but they hate all foreigners, and during the journey Harry and his companion had several narrow escapes from these awkward customers. One night Charlie Hay owed his life to his horse, or rather Lowndes' horse, for he was riding one of his—a nervous brute, luckily for him. He was some distance ahead of the guide and Harry in the forest, when he was

attacked by two gauchos with knives. Mercifully the horse shied off. No doubt the gauchos thought he was alone, and meant to have his horse and belongings. A revolver shot or two in their wake as they disappeared into the forest was the only satisfaction to be had. They told several travellers they met afterwards what had happened, and heard from them that two or three small *estancias* had been 'stuck up' in the neighbourhood, no doubt by the same gang.

The country the Master and his companions trekked through, during the last fortnight of the trip, was magnificently wild. They saw forests of beautiful trees, with wild fruit growing in profusion; occasional deer, wild pig, and ostrich, and humming-birds of gorgeous colours flying in all directions; but on the other hand, mosquitoes, snakes, tarantulas, skunks and insects of all kinds abounded.

They secured a hundred good working bullocks —the object of their journey. These they left to be brought home by natives. Eventually they reached a district in which, owing to incessant revolutions, the men were so much in the minority that the women treated them like little gods. Their chief means of livelihood was rug-making, and the story goes that these women were so much attracted by Harry Lowndes, then a fine, strapping lad of eighteen, that they suggested that Charlie Hay should leave him behind, promising him all manner of sport—pigsticking, horses galore, and hunting with native

dogs. They showered presents of delicious fruits, sweet potatoes, and other delicacies of the country upon him, including an animal called the poluttia, which, when properly cooked, was very good eating. But all to no avail. Harry could not be persuaded to stay. He did not see how he could ever get the 300 miles home from such a wild district alone when he wanted to, as the country was in such a wild state, and no guide procurable. So, as they had bought the quantity of bullocks arranged, he and Charlie Hay made a start together for home, which they reached in a little over a fortnight.

It is curious how the South American natives, directly they are attacked by illness, give themselves up for lost, and die through sheer white-livered cussedness. There were, of course, no doctors among the natives at that time, or even at the *estancias*. Referring to this, the Master writes in his diary:

> When bones were broken, we set them ourselves for each other. There were three cases of broken legs on our *estancia*. We had all the proper paraphernalia—splints, etc.—and out of the three cases, one man's leg when mended was a trifle shorter than the other, otherwise no other ill effects. Polo, cattle duffing and kicks from horses were the cause of mishaps. When a man died we buried him ourselves. Thank God, with the exception of poor young Dobbs, one of the Traills' cousins, who died from diphtheria, we had not another case of an Englishman on our ranch for whom we had to perform this painful duty.

The climate was of the best and most healthy; the life, though rough, a rare and congenial one for

a sporting young fellow; so it is no wonder that when three years were passed Harry Lowndes finished his career in the Argentine with many regrets.

Lightly the breath of the spring wind blows,
  Though laden with faint perfume;
'Tis the fragrance rare that the bushman knows,
  The scent of the wattle bloom.
Two-thirds of our journey at least are done;
  Old horse, let us take a spell
In the shade from the glare of the noonday sun;
  Thus far we have travelled well.
Your bridle I'll slip, your saddle ungirth,
  And lay them beside the log:
For you'll roll in that track of reddish earth,
  And shake like a water-dog.
Upon yonder rise there's a clump of trees,
  Their shadows look cool and broad,
You can crop the grass or fast as you please,
  While I stretch my limbs on the sward.
'Tis pleasant, I ween, with a leafy screen
  O'er the weary head, to lie
On the mossy carpet of emerald green
  'Neath the vault of the azure sky.
Thus, all alone by the wood and wold,
  I yield myself once again,
To the memories old, that like tales fresh told,
  Come flitting across the brain.

Lindsay Gordon.

CHAPTER IV

THREE YEARS IN THE SHIRES

In the spring of 1892 Harry Lowndes' father wisely decided owing to the unsettled state of the country, not to allow his son to make a start on an *estancia* of his own, which had been the original idea when he left England for the Argentine. So in May 1892 the Master returned to England, hunting all that winter with his father's hounds, and occasionally with the Grafton and the Bicester. It was during this season that he met his partner in life by becoming engaged to be married to Miss Milne, sister of the Rev. E. A. Milne, Master of the Cattistock Foxhounds since 1900, but at that time having the living of Shenley Village and hunting with the Whaddon Hounds; Shenley being only one and a half miles from Whaddon. Peculiarly enough, Harry Lowndes first saw the light in Shenley House, and was christened in the church in which he was afterwards married, his father having lived at Shenley House when he was first married, and hunted the hounds for *his* father for many years.

Miss Milne hunted very regularly with the Whaddon, Oakley and Grafton Hounds, and was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable sportswoman.

They were married on July 18th, 1893, and took a house at Great Bowden, Market Harborough, in the shire of the shires. Harry's father approached the late Mr. Stokes, the world-renowned horse-dealer of Great Bowden, as to his son's managing his stable and estate, and this being satisfactorily arranged, the young couple, with three or four hundred of their own, settled down for a couple of years. It was here that their eldest daughter was born in the spring of 1894, and christened Mabel Lilian in the church at Great Bowden.

Mr. Stokes, it may safely be said, was one of the very best judges of hunters in England. Unlike some dealers, who buy horses to suit all classes of purchasers, Mr. Stokes' were all high-class animals. Some of the purchase prices reached were enormous, even in those days of big figures. One horse at Peterborough show, a light-weight, was sold for £1,000, whilst I think I am right in saying that the celebrated unbeaten horse Whiskey, after winning £2,000 in money and cups, sold for £800.

Mr. Stokes had the great misfortune to have his eye shot out, and in consequence sold all his horses at Leicester Repository. As he was laid up at the time, he had the telephone installed in his bedroom so that he might follow the progress of the sale. When sold, the lot realised £18,000 odd. Lord Cottenham once paid a cheque to Stokes for £10,000 for horses, but this was eclipsed on a former occasion by Sir Gilbert Greenall, who, when M.F.H. of the

Belvoir, bought and paid for no less than £18,000 worth of horses from him on one day. Mr. Stokes on one occasion pointed out to Harry Lowndes no less than eight pictures hanging up in his dining-room of horses that he had sold for £1,000 each. Mr. Stokes, despite his great weight, hunted regularly with the Pytchley and the late Mr. Fernie's, and kept a fine pack of harriers, with which he showed good sport.

During the two years that the Master was with Mr. Stokes, he and Mrs. Lowndes were allowed to ride practically any of the horses, so they both also hunted with Mr. Fernie's and the Pytchley. Harry took every opportunity of learning the ins and outs of stable management, and, thanks to the interest and able tuition of Mr. Stokes, and his own heart and soul being centred in horses, hounds and the science of breeding and managing them, he soon gained much knowledge and experience which has stood him in good stead. He made a study of every kind of ailment of the horse; and has consequently had very small vets' bills to pay, despite the many horses he has had through his hands.

During his stay in the Midlands he had several good horses, and rode hard to hounds, making quite a name for himself as a straight man across country, and a keen and willing sportsman who did not put away his interest in the sport with his pink coat at the end of the season. He was ever ready to help in any way to promote the cause of fox-hunting, walking puppies for Mr. Fernie, buying all his fodder

direct from the farmer, and getting his friends to do likewise.

The late Mr. Fernie's domains (admittedly one of the best countries in the cream of the shires) might be described as typical Leicestershire country. Quite five-sixths of it is pasture, with very little plough and woodland, but a good deal of wire, which, however, was mostly marked. The late Mr. Fernie, Mr. Lowndes considers the best of sportsmen and the most kindly man he ever met—liked by everyone, and blessed with great restraint of temper. On no occasion, no matter how exasperating, was he ever heard to rate a man in the hunting-field, with the result that a large portion of the field were very unruly and (according to Harry Lowndes' diaries) over-rode hounds disgracefully, as was the case at this period with another pack in the shires.

The following letter from the late Rev. Cecil Legard to the Master, written shortly after the latter took hounds, will best describe a certain type found at that period with the Leicestershire packs :

DEAR LOWNDES,—'Yours to hand and note your contents,' as a quondam dweller at Handley Cross used to say. I'll include your pack along with the other fresh packs, which I submit to the Committee of the M.F.H. Association, who authorise me which of them to put into each new volume of our Foxhound Kennel Stud Book, etc. We did pretty well in the —— country in spite of a headless huntsman, a Master who knows nothing about hunting, and a lawless field of Cockneys.

Yours sincerely,
CECIL LEGARD.

The latter part of his reverence's letter could not better describe the field with the two packs in question. In fact, with the exception of an old hunting farmer or two, to meet a real sportsman—one who really ioved the game for its own sake and understood it—was the exception, though of course there was that band of Nimrods who looked regretfully on.

During the two years Harry Lowndes lived at Great Bowden Mr. Fernie undoubtedly had a very smart pack of hounds. The great advantage of his country was that as a rule there was not a large field out, as was the case in the Pytchley, which sometimes numbered 700 followers. The Fernie country could boast some very hard men to hounds, who hunted to ride and ride alone—the class of men one would expect to overhear saying, " If it were not for those d——d hounds, what fun we could have ! " These were of the type who forgot, as so many still forget, the dictum of Egerton Warburton :

When starting from the covert-side ye see bold Reynard burst,
We cannot have no hunting if the gentlemen go first !

Mr. Logan, one of the 'thrusters' at that time, is referred to in Mr. Lowndes' diaries as ' a very hard man indeed. He rode small horses full of blood, and always in mufti, and was undefeated over a country where hounds really ran. He was a Radical M.P. and a rare man with his fists. He sold his stud

of twelve or thirteen horses at Leicester, and they realised, including one or two whistlers, £400 a-piece —the chief purchasers being youths with more money than brains.'

Mr. Bankard, the brewer, is also spoken of as 'another very hard man, and once, when he could get no other mount, rode his carriage horse, and actually jumped a double oxer on him. He and McNeill once fought in the hunting-field with their whips, and rode, flogging each other, for three fields, taking the fences as they went. Jealousy was said to be the cause.' Two Yorkshire Masters of Hounds had a similar set-to in 1914 over alleged unsporting conduct.

'Mr. Gough was another straight man and a jealous rider, who knew more of "gurr-along" than fox-hunting.'

About this time the following entry occurs in Mr. Lowndes' diaries:

Some of the M.F.H.'s of the present day would amuse[1] some of the old-time Masters, if they could but only come to life again! The present-day young man with a good big banking account takes hounds. He attends the Rugby hound sales, gives fabulous prices for hounds entirely for their looks—work being quite a secondary consideration. The same with his horses. He fills his stables in a similar manner, and even fuller is his wardrobe. The usual result is that he resigns in three years, heartily sick of the whole thing, a poorer but a wiser man. Take, for instance, a *nouveau riche* who, a short time ago, took a fairly fashionable pack. He knew nothing about hunting, but in his agreement he

[1] Or sadden? [Editor].

himself was to hunt the hounds two days a week out of the four. Although a hopeless performer on the horn, he issued the following rules for his servants :

Private Orders for Whips and Second Horsemen.
Master's Horn when Hunting Hounds.

One touch . . .	Want Assistance.
Two touches . . .	Stop that holloa. Keep quiet.
Three touches . .	Want another horse, or second horseman.
Two even notes . .	Drawing covert.
Short notes, run into one another . . .	Want hounds together. 'To him,' and crack your crop if near at hand. (Don't keep on at it.)
Quick short notes .	Fox on foot.
Two short notes and one very long . .	Gone away.
One long and two short	Tally Ho ! back.
Long notes . . .	Come away.
Long notes and short notes after . .	Number of couple wanted.
Long notes and one very long one . .	All on.
One long note and one very short one .	Killed or gone to ground.
Two long notes, two short and one long . .	Home.

Always blow your whistle before you 'Holloa,' and wait for the Master's 'Cheer.'

Never make a noise when near the Master unless he tells you to.

Master takes his cap off to you, he means, 'Do you know anything ? '

If you *don't*, take no notice ; if you *do*, raise yours, and show him with your cap what has happened. If you cannot do this, ride up to him and tell him.

Immediately after giving information, get out of the way of hounds.

If the Master touches his cap, he understands you.

'Needless to say' (continues Mr. Lowndes in his diary), 'there was an awful muddle. The old huntsman, who had been with the pack for years, was heart-broken; and the new Master resigned at the end of his first season, and took over the captaincy of the local fire brigade.'

Another new Master of one of our crack packs stated to his friends one day cubbing: "I hate cubbing; it makes my belly ache." Yet another new Master occasionally hunted his hounds in French; and holloa'd on one occasion to them: "Hie lost, good dog." An old farmer standing by said to Harry: "Sure he'll be holloaing out 'Seek dead' next!" There was also a Master in Northumberland who (though he had had hounds for some years), through a fault of his own, had trouble with his hunt and deliberately took to destroying foxes and reading the Bible. This is not a solitary case in which ex-Masters of Hounds have not played the game. The same may be said of hunting men who have given up hunting and taken to shooting.

Mr. Lowndes concludes his tirade by asking: 'Where are the men like Osbaldeston, Meynell, Assheton Smith, Jack Russell, the late Selby Lowndes, Musters, John Lawrence, Kintores, Rosses and such-like! The gourmandising *battue* shooters and similar *soi-disant* sportsmen should learn something

from the real sportsmen of old, who are, alas, dying out, and leaving so few behind them to fill up the gaps. Even with fox-hunting the number slain is now considered everything; and, owing to the number of foxes bred, how seldom, except in the wild moorland country, do we see a run of ten miles from point to point, much less of fifteen or twenty, as in olden times. It is the number of foxes and the badness of them that spoil sport. In the old days thirty brace of foxes for a four-days-a-week country was voted enough, for every fox took some killing and showed sport. Now, forsooth, some of the present-day Masters, who advertise their kills, would be miserable unless they could publicly record they had killed seventy to a hundred brace. One wonders what some of the old Masters would think of the present miserable specimens of the genus fox found in parts of Leicestershire, where they seldom run more than a field straight, and are "mopped up," even in the regular season—sometimes three brace a day, or during cub-hunting, even as many as six brace. Wherein, I wonder, lies either the satisfaction to a Master, huntsman or his hounds, and where the credit? In a country in which foxes are just sufficient and the right sort, in which a huntsman has to work hard to handle his fox . . . *there* is real satisfaction for Master, huntsman and the true Nimrod, and incidentally for hounds which are then really savage to "tear him and eat him."

'The late Mr. John Lawrence, M.F.H.' (continues the Master), 'was once invited into the Duke of Beaufort's country, and I believe I am right in saying that they hunted six foxes and killed the lot in the one day. Mr. Lawrence remarked to a friend that if he hunted the Duke's country his hounds could live on foxes and require no feeding at home.'

On one occasion a friend of Harry Lowndes' was hunting in the Duke's country. They killed a leash of foxes, as he thought, and on the way home he said to his companion: "We have killed a leash to-day; quite moderate."

"Oh, no!" replied his companion. "We killed three and a half brace."

"How's that?"

"Oh," came the answer, "you know when we drew the large root field; hounds chopped two brace there; the hounds were allowed to break them up without the servants dismounting."

Such actually had been the case, though those not close at hand had not even known that a fox had been killed in the roots. 'Killing foxes in this wholesale manner is no criterion of sport, and does hounds no good.' The Master adds a note to his diatribe: 'A brace of well-killed cubs after a difficult morning's work will do hounds more good than any number of "mopped up" foxes.'

H. Selby Lowndes has always held strong views regarding hound shows, as witness the following:

There are some Masters who take hounds almost entirely to gratify their hobby for breeding for shows, and who care little for the actual hunting. One of these so-called sportsmen was heard conversing with a friend at Peterborough Hound Show. In the course of conversation he said:

"Oh, I am sending a couple of bitches to such and such a dog."

"Oh, really?" replied his friend. "Do you know anything about his work?"

"No," was the reply; "d——n his work; but he will just correct the little weakness of my bitches below their knees."

Two other Masters used Rothschild's stag-hounds, simply and solely to breed for show, to which the M.F.H. Association very quickly and wisely put a stop. Harry Lowndes was present at a meeting when the question was considered, attending purposely to vote against it, having received the following letter from that great hound-breeder, the late Mr. C. B. E. Wright:

Re staggers.

Kingston,
Abingdon.

DEAR SELBY LOWNDES,—Turn up if you possibly can at the meeting on October 15th, or if you cannot, write a strong letter to the Chairman objecting to the introduction of above into our Stud Book.

Yours truly,
C. B. E. WRIGHT.

Harry Lowndes made exhaustive inquiries to find out from hound men the result as regards work that the introduction of stag-hound blood had. The evidence he secured was that they were an absolute

failure. In using a stag-hound as a stallion the Masters who adopted this course did so entirely for looks. A stag-hound not being called upon to draw for his quarry, and tongue also being a minor quality, skirting, babbling and muteness followed as a sequence upon the cross. The same evidence came from hound men hunting with packs whose hounds are bred entirely for looks and Peterborough. In each case the reply, in effect, was, "Hounds have deteriorated in their work." In one or two instances these answers came from M.F.H.'s taking over these show packs and who had previously handled hounds bred for work.

There was at this time (so chronicles the Master), a great joke against one pack of hounds which won many prizes at Peterborough, viz. that the prize-winners when they went hunting were sent home at 'half time,' as they were too precious, or unable, to do a whole day's work.

Apropos of hound shows, another story which went the round was against the Cattistock, which not only showed at Peterborough and Reigate, but also at all the little shows in Devonshire. On one occasion one of their swell dog-hounds had to compete against a poodle for 'the best dog of any breed in the show,' the poodle winning.

It is the Master's view that hound shows have done a lot of harm. His opinion is that the present-day show hounds have neither the tongue, nose nor drive found in the majority of packs bred for work.

To the latter class belong, or belonged, Lord Fitzhardinge's, the late Lord Portman's, Mr. Curre's, Lord Yarborough's, the Bramham, South Durham, Sir Watkin Wynn's, Lord Harrington's, the Whaddon, Heythorp, Ludlow, the late Lord Middleton's, York and Ainsty, and many others throughout England. The Masters of these packs studied the breeding of their hounds for work rather than looks, but tried as far as possible to combine the two.

'Among the most celebrated packs I have seen at work' (continues the Master), 'there is one bred for looks, and so *inbred* that the hounds are so slack it is even difficult to get them along—they tail for miles, and tire long before the day is out. Added to this, a new Master, on being asked what he thought of his pack, replied: "They have never hunted a clean fox for years" (every fox having been 'doctored'), and further, "after a run of an hour and a half they want forty minutes' rest before they are fit to go on hunting." Thank God, for the future of the chase, there are only a very few, in comparison with the number of packs in England, who carry the show business to such an extent as this.'

In the Pytchley country, at the time Harry Lowndes hunted with them, Lord Spencer was reigning for the third time, and was a popular Master. His huntsman was Will Goodall, 'a rare good man, quick and a finished horseman, with a

thorough knowledge of his job,' says our diarist, who adds: 'During the twenty years he hunted the Pytchley he only missed one day, and that was to bury his mother. Even then he turned up later in the field in the afternoon. He was presented with a testimonial amounting to over £3,000, but unfortunately only lived a short time to enjoy it, cancer carrying him off shortly afterwards. Jack Isaac then became huntsman, and in his first season showed excellent sport. It was a rare scenting season, and the Pytchley Wednesdays were toasted all over Leicestershire. Mr. Wroughton took over the hounds just before Goodall gave up, and Captain Steed supplied Mr. Wroughton with horses. Poor Goodall was on his back nearly every time hounds went out, the horses not being half made and knowing little about flying jumps. Mr. Wroughton treated the country well and spent a lot of money, but he was only a figure-head, and his generosity was not half appreciated. To mount the establishment of the Pytchley Hunt cost a Master between four and five thousand pounds. Mr. Wroughton was a hound-breeder more than anything else, and made the great mistake of using stag-hounds. The Pytchley foxes were numerous, but bad. Their country is second to none, consisting as it does of undulating grass for miles.'

Harry Lowndes also hunted with the Woodland Pytchley, and speaks of it as 'a most sporting country, and a pack followed by good sporting

fellows, fond of *real fox-hunting*. They invariably numbered only a dozen to twenty, which showed the class of man hunting with the Pytchley proper, for the Woodland met within three miles of Market Harborough, the centre of hunting in those parts.'

He continues: 'They were not what is called "fashionable"—a detestable word in connection with sport—but had a rare pack of hounds, and though up to Peterborough form and winning prizes, were far different from the bad-shouldered, lumbersome brutes of the present-day show type. They had beautiful necks and shoulders, and had quality as well as substance. Mr. Mackenzie was Master. His pack were hardly ever overriden or interfered with, and could work and drive and kill a fox in grand fashion, and had some trimming runs. The Master hunted this pack himself; he was not what you would call a hard man, and his hounds did all the work themselves, killing their foxes handsomely. He resigned in 1908 after hunting the country for some years, and sold his pack, the dog-hounds to the Duke of Beaufort for £2,000, the bitches to Mr. Wroughton for £3,000—total, £5,000 for the whole pack.

'Mr. Mackenzie was succeeded by a number of Masters of the Woodland Pytchley who only stayed a couple of seasons—the usual period for those whose heart is not really in the job. One of these, who stayed rather longer, was a rich young man

whose hounds must have cost him an enormous amount of money. He bought a large number at Rugby, and by the time he had formed his pack had spent some thousands on it. His horses, during his Mastership, certainly cost him an equal amount. The usual result followed: after four years he gave up and sold his pack (which must have realised considerably less than half they cost) and bought an opera house! (Not that there's any law against that.)

'Lord Lonsdale was then Master of the Quorn, and did things in great style, though possibly with a lot of unnecessary show, which, after all, is a personal matter. His Lordship entertained the ex-German Emperor during his Mastership, and fêted him tremendously. He also, on one occasion, gave all the farmers and their wives in the Quorn Hunt a champagne lunch, rather after the manner of that early Yorkshire sportsman, Colonel Thornton. He was a good organiser, and provided carts to take away those unable to walk after the feast! Lord Lonsdale is a rare man with his fists, and something of a martinet in the hunting-field. Tom Firr was his huntsman, the best huntsman England has ever seen. His Lordship later took the Cottesmore, and entertained at the Warncliff Rooms every Master of Hounds in England. We were treated right royally, and spent a most enjoyable evening. His band played during the evening, and the repast was magnificent, the following being the

MENU

Caviar Frais
Melon Cantaloup Glacé

Tortue Claire Royale

Timbale de Filets de Sole Great Central
Medaillons de Homard Parisienne
Poularde à la Edward VII

Selle d'Agneau à l'Orloff
Petits Pois à la Français
Pommes Croquettes
Mousse de Jambon au Ports
Sorbets au Champagne
Caille en Casserole Perigourdine
Cœurs de Laitues

Pêches Alexandra
Mignardises

Dessert

WINES

Sherry : Pale, Dry Amontillado
Hock : Rudesheimer, 1897
Madeira : Fine old East India
Claret : Château Pichon Longueville, 1899
Burgundy : Pomard, 1895
Champagne : Deutz & Gelderman, Gold Lack, 1900
Geisler & Co., extra superior dry, 1895
Sparkling Moselle
Port : Taylor's, 1896
Liqueur Brandy, 1858
Apollinaris. Perrier

CHAPTER V

MASTER OF THE WELLS HARRIERS

On May 1st, 1895, Henry Selby Lowndes took over the Mastership of the Wells Harriers, in Somersetshire, Mr. B. C. Bird having resigned after two seasons. A complimentary dinner was given by the members of the Hunt to the incoming and outgoing Masters at the Swan Hotel, and a very large company enjoyed a most convivial evening.

The Wells country is described by the Master as 'one of the best and most sporting in England, consisting of nearly all grass. The vale is practically the same sort of country as that hunted by the Blackmore Vale, which it adjoins; the hill country (viz. the Mendips) is a sea of grass and jumpable stone walls, sporting in the extreme. When on the Mendips, the country is entirely flat, and looking into space, nothing is visible but grass and walls.'

When Harry Lowndes took over the country it was well stocked with good wild hares, and on the hills they ran straight and far. There were also a good few foxes, which, being unhunted by foxhounds, soon had the new M.H. on their track. He imported fresh blood into the kennels, buying small hounds from Mr. Fernie, the Pytchley, the Oakley,

LT.-COL. W. SELBY LOWNDES, M.F.H.

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and his father's pack. He spent the summer months in nursing his country and becoming acquainted with all the farmers, the secretary, Mr. Hart, helping him in every way. Mr. Hart, who had been scribe for years, was an Irishman and a rare fellow to fight. He hunted regularly, was a sportsman to the backbone, and beloved by all. He lived in Wells—a cathedral town like most cathedral towns in temperament, but very lively on market days. In fact the Master always maintains there was more fun, and more whiskey and gin drunk on market days, in Wells and Canterbury (when he came to know it in after years), than any other towns in England.

We find the Master speaking of the farmers as 'a good lot. They followed the harriers regularly, and were hard to beat in their native country, the Mendip Hills. When they could not negotiate an extra high wall, they would turn their horses round, back them into the loose stone wall, sending the top clattering down, and then calmly jump the gap they had successfully made. The stone walls were all made loosely piled up, and not cemented or plastered except in a very few instances.'

The Wells M.H. was, ere long, to find in North Yorkshire that farmers could also drink much gin on market days, and equally well overcome the difficulty of unjumpable stone walls.

The Master hunted his pack in a different way from that adopted by most Masters of Harriers, for

he treated his pack as if they were fox-hounds, and tally-ho'd his hares when they were in view, holloa'd his hounds forward, and as a rule forced his hares out of their usual line of country, thus securing some fine straight runs. At the same time, on bad scenting days, he employed that patience which is essential to hare-hunting, and which hare-hunting teaches. Indeed, the late Sir Reginald Graham always advocated harriers as the best school for budding Masters of Fox-hounds.

The Master and his wife and little daughter established themselves at Wookey House, in Wookey, a pretty village two miles from Wells, and here, on the first Monday in the season, the new M.H. had his opening fixture. *The Field* gave the following account :

> The new M.H. held his first meet at his own house, where all the farmers were entertained to a Hunt breakfast. A large number of members and farmers put in an appearance to greet the young and energetic new M.H. A large field moved off at 11.15 to Mr. Glanville's farm, where a good hare was found, providing a gallop of forty minutes, ending in a kill. A second hare, found on Mendip, proved a stout one, and ran over the wall country to Rodney Stoke, and away nearly to Cheddar, where she was pulled down, putting a finish to a rare good opening of the season.

On Friday, November 8th, we find the pack ' met at Rodney Stoke, and drew Stoke Wood. Hounds were not long before they had a brace of foxes on foot. Scent was excellent, and they rattled one of their foxes to such a tune that he decided to face the open at once. Running across a most delightful stone

wall country he made a point for Wookey Rocks, but bearing right-handed he ran to Draycot, on to the Ebbor Rocks. Through this stronghold by Gulliford he ran right on to Cheddar Cliffs, hounds racing him in view. As they reached the cliffs one hound grabbed at him, and they both rolled over the cliff together. The fox managed to catch and hold on in some overhanging scrub as he fell, but poor old Ringwood went to his doom. Two couple of the rest of the pack also went over the cliffs; three had a miraculous escape, but the fourth broke both his shoulders and had to be destroyed immediately. A man was let down by a rope to dislodge the fox, which was eventually accomplished with much danger, but being damaged by the fall and owing to the distance he had run, he was soon killed.

'The five couple of hounds that were left hunting the other fox in Rodney Stoke Wood, ran him in the woods without his going far afield, and eventually marked him to ground, where he was left.'

The Master showed good sport, and his field increased considerably, likewise the subscriptions, despite the fact that some thought he was too much addicted to the fox. Amongst the good supporters he had the late Messrs. McLean, Strachey, Spencer, Phipps, Webster, Reid, Plinman, Hart, Kemble, Adlam, Grien Vincent, three Meads and many others. Some members from the Blackmore Vale and the South and West Wilts countries came to support the young M.H., the subscription of the latter increasing

the Wells Harriers' finance to nearly double the amount it had ever been before. The M.H. hunted occasionally with the Blackmore Vale in Mr. Guest's time. On one occasion he hired a couple of horses, and rode twenty miles to the meet, to have a hunt with the B.V.H. On arriving at the meet he found a very large field. Mr. Guest hunted the hounds six days a week at his own expense, and was therefore very independent. On this occasion he 'drew one covert, and then something upset him, so he slowly took off his cap to the field and went home at twelve o'clock.' It is easy to imagine the disgust of those out, and the rage of the Wells M.H. after hiring two horses and coming so far!

Mr. Guest, he recalls, was eccentric, and altogether an extraordinary man. His costume was quaint and archaic, without the comfort or convenience of the old-time kit. He was immensely rich, or rather his wife, Lady Theodora Guest, was. They kept a large establishment of horses and hounds, and over one hundred grey horses—grey because Mr. Guest (like Sir R. Graham when Hurworth M.F.H.) would have no other colour.

Mr. Guest always smoked a Broseley clay pipe, a churchwarden broken off short, and generally well-coloured. If he saw a labourer or a stone-breaker on the road with a well-browned or blackened pipe, he would have it at once. He was a strict teetotaller, and always insisted on his servants being the same, with the result that some of them were often 'tight'

out of work hours. He was only once known to stop at a public-house out hunting. It was on a fearfully stormy, wet day. He ordered 'three whiskeys neat and extra strong.' The whips, who were half perished, were delighted, but were very glum when Mr. Guest made them pour the whiskey down their boots, 'to keep the cold out!'

In his diary Mr. Lowndes thus continues his memories and impressions:

> The Blackmore Vale is a fine country, though very deep, all grass, and full of foxes. But when Mr. Hargreave succeeded Mr. Guest the hedgerow foxes were very bad, and he set to during cubbing to kill off as many as possible, and get rid, at any rate, of the worst. They killed about one hundred brace of cubs, but it did not alter the breed of bad foxes in the country.
>
> Mr. Guest went to America, and bought some of Sir Roger de Coverley's breed of hounds, and showed them at Peterborough Hound Show. One hound had no stern. He went out of his way to call his hounds extraordinary names of an awful length; it took his whips half their time to master the names, and still more time to holloa them out.

Besides hunting with the Blackmore Vale, Harry Lowndes hunted on one occasion with the Sparkford Vale Harriers in the B.V.H. territory. The Sparkford Vale was a very nice piece of country, and he recalls that the farmers were right to a man. They encouraged the harriers and supported them well. On the occasion Harry Lowndes went to see this pack they met at a very celebrated farmer's house whom he describes as 'a man noted for hospitality, very fond of filling up his friends, and, if possible,

sending them home jolly. After hunting, all the field partook of his good things, and that day was no exception to the general rule.' He seemed to make a dead set at Harry Lowndes, but mistook his man, and was himself ripe before the Wells M.H. had started to feel comfortable.

Mr. Holt Needham was the Master of the Sparkford Vale, and when he first started his pack[1] Harry Lowndes sold him some good hounds. He had a job to keep pace with the hospitality of the farmers in his hunt, finding the truth of what H. S. L. has always maintained—that 'A Master of Hounds requires a stomach like an ostrich, and a head like pig-iron,' not to mention an inordinate supply of Jorrocks' 'Sedlitz pooders'!

On December 20th the Wells Harriers met at Mr. Bird's, the ex-Master, who entertained all comers. The following record is duly set down in the Master's diary: 'A good hare was soon found at Priddy Hill, and ran hard by Priddy to Chanelois, and on by Westbury, over a nice country to Hundred Acre, and on by Hunter's Lodge nearly to Ebbor Rocks, where after a fine hunt of an hour and twenty minutes, hounds killed her in the road. Another short spin and a kill ended a rare good day, and the field were entertained to a stirrup cup on their way home, which was more than welcome.'

Many other good runs took place during the season, but Friday, March 13th, 1896 stands out as

[1] Mr. O. N. Holt Needham was Master of the Sparkford Vale from 1895–1905. —Editor.

a cameo. Their fixture was at Pilton, in the Blackmore Vale country, and the following is the Master's account :

One or two coverts were drawn blank, but a little later a fine, old-fashioned hunt took place, and was enjoyed by many visitors from the South and West Wilts and Blackmore Vale, including Major Shearston, Messrs. Thring, Brooklyn, Napier, Meade, Clark, Laver Hall, Kemble and Creed, etc. A fox was found at one o'clock in a straggling plantation, and the pack were quickly on his line, and drove him at a rare pace over a most blind and largely fenced country, which caused much disaster. Leaving Dulcote on the right, they ran to Warminster Wood, through like a flash, and away as if for Wells, but leaving it on the right, they ran faster still to North Wootton, left-handed through the Pilton woods (here horses had all they could do to keep with hounds), back by Warminster, and on to Mr. Hall's covert, still at a fast pace. Through these large coverts and away on to the Mendips. Here all the horses were beat, hounds having been running for an hour and fifty minutes, mostly at a great pace. Eventually the Master, Mr. Meade and Mr. Kemble fell in with the pack, which had run to ground in some rocks, and being in an unsafe place, the fox was bolted and killed after a run lasting in all 2 hrs. 15 mins.

Hounds were advertised to end their season on March 25th at Slab House. The late Mr. Leopold Rothschild very kindly gave the Master one of his stags with which to finish the season. The meet was on Mendip, and attracted an enormous field from adjoining hunts, close on three hundred horsemen and hundreds of carriages and foot folk forgathering. The stag was turned down at a quarter to twelve, and after fifteen minutes' law, hounds were laid on. Great was the scramble for a start,

and great the jealousy among the different hunts. The stag, as if bent on doing the hunt credit, started over a perfect line of stone wall country at a good pace, running parallel with the Bristol road. He ran straight for a couple of miles, then turned left-handed, and crossing a fine line, went on to Harptree and right on to Greenore, where they checked. The respite was welcomed, as the pace had been very good for an hour. Viewed here, the stag started running again through several small coverts, then faced the open and was taken close to Harptree. Being savage, the Master had had permission from Mr. Leopold to kill him, which was done, and the venison was divided among the farmers out. The Master then drew several likely coverts for fox, and eventually found one in a larch plantation. Hounds ran him hard for thirty minutes before he went to ground. Everyone being more than satisfied, 'Home' was the order. This was a rare finish to a good season. A good season it might well be called, for hounds had not missed a day, having hunted forty-five days and killed fifty hares and five brace of foxes.

In the words of Jorrocks (whom the Master never tires of quoting), 'Then came the summer of our discontent,' but though hunting was over, he had not, like Mr. Jorrocks, to go back to Great Coram Street. He had his hounds and kennel management to superintend during the summer, and seldom a day passed which did not find him at the

kennels, Sundays included. On the Sabbath he generally called for the late honorary huntsman, Mr. Gilbert Vincent, on his way to the kennels, and the whole afternoon was spent on the flags, talking hunting.

The Master even in those early days was quite the Master of his kennels. He attended to the smallest details, and could put his men right in a moment as to the feeding of hounds, the way a copper of meal ought to be thickened, and the amount and strength of the broth and flesh used, when it ought to be mixed thick and when thin, and the general science of feeding and 'doctoring.'

In his spare time he played cricket, both for Wells and a club called the Cuckoo Penner's. He was a bowler of no mean order in those days, bowling very fast, and was also a tremendous hitter. Once when batting on the county ground at Taunton against a scratch team of Sammy Woods', including Dr. E. M. Grace, he hit Sammy Woods out of the ground for six.

The Wells cricket ground was a very fine one, and matches took place there twice a week. One day in the week he played for the Cuckoo Penner's Club, the other day for his own village, Wookey, of which team he was the captain.

A story is told of a match against neighbouring villages, which proved most exciting. The opposing side had one run to make and one wicket to fall, and their captain was most anxious to win the

match. The last man to go in, having rather overdone it at lunch, was half seas over, so the captain said to him :

"Now, be very careful, and if you see two balls, hit the one on the right."

In he went, and got clean-bowled the first ball, much to the disgust of his side. On his return to the pavilion the captain asked him why he did not do as he was told.

"I did," he replied. "I saw two balls and I hit the one on the right ; but I hit it with the wrong bat!"

The Master also did a certain amount of fishing, which on one occasion led to the following adventure :

He and the secretary of the Hunt, Mr. Ed. Hart (the Irishman already mentioned), were fishing at Cheddar, when a burly, loafing cad started throwing stones into the river near the point at which they were engaged. A challenge was the result, Hart and the young Master tossing who should defend their right. Harry Lowndes won the toss, and immediately called upon the hulking brute to take his coat off. They set to desperately, but the fight didn't last long. The Master, who had beaten the champion heavy-weight at his school (his brother at the same time winning the light-weight), hit his opponent a smashing blow in the ribs with his right, followed up with a left to the jaw, which outed the worthy and sent him rolling over three times. Utterly discomfited, he got up and walked off without a word, the Master and the secretary then returning to their fishing.

As August drew near the Master's ardour for the chase increased daily, and have a hunt he must, so off he went to Taunton, and hired horses from White, the dealer, to have a day or two with the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds. Great was his interest and keenness on his first day's wild-stag-hunting. Knowing the Master, Mr. Sanders, he was allowed to go with the tufters. Tufting took some time, as there was very little scent, but it was all enjoyment to the young M.H., and he was away from the huge crowd hunting with the celebrated pack.

The Wells Master also tried his hand at otter-hunting with a few old hounds in the neighbouring rivers, but otters were scarce, never having been preserved. He only succeeded in finding a brace during the summer, for which he must have tramped many a hundred miles (as did Parson Jack Russell before he killed his first otter). One of these he stuck to, and finally had the satisfaction of killing.

During the summer he picked up his horses for the coming season, and invariably sold his hunt horses well, having been taught by his father that the great secret of financing a pack of hounds was for the Master to keep his money together over young horses, a piece of advice Harry Lowndes has always followed. He sold his horses at useful prices at the end of the season—the best of them to a Mr. Eden, of Wiltshire, which came about thus-wise: He was staying with Mr. Eden, and one night during dinner a particular horse was mentioned,

and Mr. Meade, who was present and knew the horse, began to sing his praises. Mr. Eden, although never having seen him, asked the price.

"Eighty pounds," said Harry (who had given thirty pounds for it).

"Done!" said Mr. Eden.

After asking a few questions, he wished him to be sent the day after the morrow. The Master went home the following day. The next (the day arranged for the horse to be delivered) was a hunting day. The Master longed to have one more ride on his favourite, so wired to Mr. Eden that he could not get a horse-box, and had a final hunt on him. As bad luck would have it, however, Mr. Eden had wired to Wells to order a horse-box for the day arranged. He soon guessed the reason of the Master's ruse, and, much amused, christened the horse 'Ananias' when he eventually arrived. Ananias turned out a famous hunter, and Mr. Eden had him for years, and never valued a horse more.

Another horse the Master sold to his friend Mr. Meade. On this occasion Mr. Meade was coming to stay with Lowndes, who went to meet him at Wells station with his man and trap, riding the horse down himself. On the way home, Mr. Meade suggested that if Harry would ride the horse parallel with the road over the two miles of country to his house, he would buy him at the price asked. Nothing loath, the M.H. jumped out of the road, and rode the horse over each fence as it came, jumping back into the

road again at the finish of the prescribed course. Mr. Meade took the horse without a word, and was carried on him with satisfaction for years.

It was during this same year that the Master bought a famous grey horse out of a 'bus from a job-master at Wells. This horse (known as Fly Catcher), made him a name in Yorkshire in after years, and on Lowndes leaving that country he sold him to the late Mr. F. Wilson Horsfall (afterwards Master of the Bilsdale Hounds). The editor of this book rode him on several occasions, and always considered him one of the finest fencers he ever crossed.

This summer the young Master became the proud possessor of a son and heir. His only son was born on the 25th of June and christened at Wookey Church, Montacute William Woorall—all three names hereditary in the Selby Lowndes family.

On September 1st, 1896, the Wells M.H.'s life started again, beginning with bye-days to enter the young hounds, and, on non-hunting days, shooting partridges with Messrs. McLean, Meade, Hall, Sir Edward Hill and the Hon. Mr. Jolliffe, M.P.

The opening meet was held on October 19th at the Master's place, and a field of seventy horsemen turned out. A good day's sport was enjoyed, three good spins and two kills being the result. Judging from the Master's diary, this seems to have been a useful scenting season, with good sport all through.

On the 23rd they had a rare day from Castle Comfort, a very favourite meet, the country being wild

and open, with no end of lepping. The first hare provided a large field with a very fast forty minutes, the Master forcing his hare out of her country, which so often proved the making of straight runs. The second hare ran with a failing scent for an hour before she was pulled down in the open. The day finished with a short, fast spin into the coverts, where hounds were stopped.

The young M.H. seems to have been incorrigibly addicted to the fox, and hunted 'the aristocrat of the woodlands' at every opportunity, showing some rare runs on the Mendips and in the Vale on these occasions. The season was an open one; they hardly missed a day, and sport was never better nor scent so serving.

On off-days the M.H. took a turn with the South and West Wilts, whose territory he describes as 'a rare sporting country, with a very fine lot of farmers, all of whom hunted in black coats, jack boots and hunting caps. Jack Martin was Master—a rare good fellow to hounds, whilst his wife was equally good over a good country. Much to everyone's regret, he gave up, Mr. Henry Harris, the Bacon King, taking the hounds.'

One day H. S. L. went out with them to Semley Station. Freeman, who was hunting hounds, had a bad fall and broke his collar-bone, so Mr. Harris took the horn. The diarist adds: 'It was an extraordinary coincidence that when he found his fox they ran in a circle for a couple of miles, and finally killed in a pigsty. The country was rough and wild

in parts, some quite good and very sporting indeed, with big ditches and banks that took a bit of getting over, and plenty of grass. Mr. Harris did not remain Master long.[1] Lord Heytesbury took over the hounds in 1901, and was very popular, but died early in life, much to everyone's grief.'

On one occasion Lord Heytesbury invited Lowndes to a hare drive on the Wiltshire Downs, which resulted in the slaughter of no less than 380 hares in the day. Harry did not relish the job at all, considering it 'nothing better than slaughter, but of course it had to be done.'

Some members of the South and West Wilts asked H. S. L. if he would take the Mastership, and the farmers whom he had met in the hunting-field were most anxious for him to do so, but the subscription —£900 for three days—was out of the question for a younger son with a limited income. The pity is that all sportsmen are not born rich and all the rich born sportsmen!

The Master had a day occasionally with the Stanton Drew Harriers, the Weston-super-Mare, and once with the Clifton Foot Harriers. When out with the latter he met the great Dr. W. G. Grace taking his exercise running with them. The farmers always said they would sooner have a dozen horses than the doctor across their farms; his huge bulk played havoc with any fence he went through, reducing it to matchwood. In later years the Master shot

[1] From 1894 to 1898, when Mr. P. J. Browne became M.F.H., remaining till 1900. A committee then controlled the country for a season.—Editor.

partridges with W. G. Grace at Mr. Coleman's Sandwich Farm. W. G. got his feet very wet during the day, and on his return to the farm told the boot-boy to put a few oats in his boots. "A *few* oats!" replied the boy. "By gad, doctor, they'll hold a bushel apiece!" The doctor's feet were proportionate to his size.

On January 25th, 1896, the Master's diary records the following:

Met at Waldegrave Arms, a very large field out from neighbouring packs. Had a capital day's sport, though the amount of hares spoilt the first run. We found a good hare, and ran her over a very open good country without a covert for miles. Hounds ran very hard at times, and the going was heavy, and a lot of jumping and much grief. Mr. Vincent took a terrible fall and broke his jaw, another man broke his nose and blackened both his eyes over a big wall. Hounds when close to their hare after fifty minutes' hard going ran into a marsh, where at least three brace of hares were on foot, and hounds had to be stopped. Hounds had yet another good run over mucn the same country, killing their hare after twenty-eight minutes of the best. It was a treat to see hounds going at racing pace over the stone walls. Made up my mind to give up the harriers and take to the thief of the world, having always been addicted to the nobler animal. Sent in my resignation with many regrets in due course.

On receiving the Master's resignation, the members and farmers of the Hunt drew up and signed the following petition:

We, the undersigned members of the Committee of the Wells Subscription Harriers, landowners, tenant farmers and friends, owning and renting land within the district hunted over by the above-mentioned pack of hounds, have decided to address you in the following manner. We sincerely hope that you may see your way to reconsider your

decision of a few weeks since to resign the Mastership and that you will again take the post which you have hitherto so admirably filled, and will continue to show the very excellent sport that the followers of this pack have so thoroughly enjoyed for the past two seasons.

If you reply favourably to the petition, which is the wish of one and all, we pledge ourselves to give you all the support laying in our power in the future, the same as in the past.

The Master, who had already been in correspondence with the Committee of the Bilsdale Hunt, wrote with very sincere regret, thanking his Wells friends for their support, but stating that he could not see his way to reconsider his resignation, his determination to transfer his activities wholly to fox being fixed.

The season again finished up with a stag lent by Mr. Leopold Rothschild to the Master, the largest field ever known in that district taking part in the sport. In the evening the Master was entertained at a Hunt dinner, a cheerful termination to very happy years spent as a M.H.

The following account appeared in the *Wells Journal* regarding the Master giving up the Wells Harriers :

It is with much regret that we notice the Mastership of this pack will be vacant at the close of the season. Since Mr. H. W. Selby Lowndes accepted the post he has shown the best of sport, and has done more than this—he has contributed largely to the subscription list which the great number of his friends have augmented to such an extent that the debt to the treasurer owing at the commencement of the season has been entirely wiped out, and when everything is paid there will be a considerable balance to go forward to pay up to the end of August. Mr. Selby Lowndes will

naturally take with him the good wishes of the whole of the sporting community and of the farmers, with whom he is justly popular. It has always been evident that his feeling has been with the fox, and since we cannot retain his valuable services, we cannot but congratulate the country he goes to.

Before passing on from the story of the Wells Harriers, mention must be made of the many horse fairs held on the Mendips, to which frequent mention is made in the Master's diaries. Binegar Fair was a good sample, held in a wild part of the Mendip Hills. Harry Lowndes and his friends seldom missed one of these fairs, and generally bought a useful animal or two. It was possible to buy a horse there from 10s. up to £80.

'The gypsies and all the scamps and lowest copers for miles around were in evidence at these fairs' (writes H. S. L.), 'and it was not safe to leave a decent horse or cart in any of the stables. At the same time, the fun was fast and furious, as besides the horses there were boxing booths and shows of all sorts. In these days every young man who hunts considers himself a judge of a horse, and it is deemed equally unpardonable to impugn a gentleman's knowledge in horseflesh as to cast an aspersion on his morals, honour or courage. But few of them know the tricks practised at fairs by the gypsies and a certain type of dealers. I went out of my way to learn some of their mysteries and arts' (continues the Master). 'Amongst them are the following:

'*Bishoping*, which is filing the teeth and tusks of an old horse to a moderate and juvenile length, and scooping a hollow in the mark tooth, which is afterwards darkened with a little caustic. In this way animals of twenty may be reduced to second childhood and made young by skilful dentistry. When badly done by an unskilful young hand, he is termed "a poor curate."

'*Settling the Blowers* is manufacturing an apparently sound pair of bellows in a broken-winded animal. It is effected by putting the horse through a course of physic and then increasing his exercise by degrees, feeding him on mashes and green meat and allowing him no hay and very little water. Hogs' lard and hellebore are plentifully administered, particularly in the morning of the day when the horse is intended for sale. By these means the rankest piper may be lulled for a time. The way to detect it is to look at the mouth, which will be greasy and the breath foul. N.B.—This trick was once tried on me by a gypsy, but I noticed it, and gave the horse a bucket of water, which very nearly killed him, and frightened the gypsy not a little.

'*Puffing the Glims* is the art of filling up the unsightly cavities above the eyes of an aged horse. A pin or the point of a lancet is inserted in the skin, and the breath blown through the aperture until the animal's temples are as smooth as a yearling's. Young horses are often sunk above the eye, nevertheless "puffing the glims" is a very effectual

operation, for the hollows considerably add to the other indications of age in the head of a horse.

'*Figging* is a way of inducing a horse to carry his tail cleverly by a plentiful application of ginger, a very common trick with the Romanies. A nick is also sometimes made on the inside of a horse's tail, so that it is sore and he carries it well.

'*Diamonding, or Beaning,* is a method of making a horse that is lame on one leg appear to be passably sound. It is managed by inserting a sharp pebble under the shoe of the sound foot; thus the horse is rendered equally lame on both feet, and consequently appears to be only a little "groggy."

'*A Wood-pecker, or a Crib-biter,* is a horse that takes hold of the edge of his manger between his teeth, and sucks in the wind. Such horses are seldom able to be kept in condition. A small coper, when selling a horse which cribs, keeps him on the fret in the stable by the show of his whip, and doctors the manger with aloes, which, if the horse is not accustomed to it, prevents him from showing his vice for a short time.

'*A Quid* (or *quidder*) is a horse that chews his food and throws it out of his mouth again in round balls. The term "quid" is also applied to bad feeders and to those horses which, from any cause, are impeded from masticating their food.

'*Corking the Tallow* used to be practised by the most despicable of wretches to stop the signs of glanders. It is done by blowing some styptic

powder up the nostrils and thereby stopping the pus from running.

'*A Feather* is an incipient cataract which is easily discerned by inspecting the eye of a horse in the light.

'*A Jack* is a young spavin. Splints, ringbones, throughpins, spavins, speedy-cuts, curbs, corns, thrushes, and cracks, are generally called by their proper names.

'*A Methodist* is a horse that has been down on its knees (i.e. suggestive of prayer).

'*A Lawyer* is a horse that likes to be well paid for his work —a hard-skinned, insensible slug, callous to the eternal hints of the ineffectual thong, capable of exertion but unwilling to progress any pace exceeding two miles an hour.

'*A Flat Catcher* is a fine, showy animal but intrinsically worthless. He is generally in high condition, with great mettle and showy action, but after half an hour's trot, if put back in the stable for an hour and then led out again for inspection, he will invariably be all to pieces.

'*Leggers-in, or Knock-outs*, are terms describing a system: When a promising horse is submitted for sale by auction, dealers who wish to purchase him covey together in a corner, and after settling the highest price it is advisable to offer, commission one from among them to bid to that amount, while the rest all stand out. When the lot is knocked down, they form a circle, and one offers £1 or less to each of the others provided he may be allowed to take the horse at the auction price. This is a common trick, much practised, not only at horse sales, but in many trades.'

CHAPTER VI

M.F.H. OF THE BILSDALE

On April 8th, 1897, Henry Selby Lowndes was elected Master of the Bilsdale Fox-hounds for three years, and took up his residence at Carlton-in-Cleveland. He named his house (which was built for him by the vicar of the parish, the Rev. J. L. Kyle, M.A.) Handley Cross, for the whole of the circumstances surrounding the contemporary history of the Bilsdale Hunt were not dissimilar from those of Mr. Jorrocks' famous Handley Cross pack.

A few words as to the history of the Bilsdale—one of the oldest packs, if not the oldest, of fox-hounds in England—may be of interest. At the outset it may truly be said that nowhere in England is fox-hunting more enthusiastically carried on from a real, deep-rooted love of the chase, than in Yorkshire and Devonshire. Nothing but an inherent affection for fox-hunting, the spirit of sport, and the congenial company it offers, could tempt men to hunt in the wild dales found in such abundance on the north and east coast of Yorkshire; and yet there is scarcely one of them that is not regularly hunted and able to boast a pack of its own.

The Master was not long before he was impressed by this Northern sporting spirit. He wrote:

> Trencher-fed and plainly appointed these packs may be, but they show rare sport with the wild hill foxes, and it takes a good man to live with them over their rough country. Rough country it is in the extreme; wood, mountain, bog, precipice, and moorland; with very little open country. In most localities it is possible to hunt from daylight till dark and never see anything but moor and woods. Every man who hunts in these countries is a sportsman in the best sense of the word. They have a great knowledge of woodcraft and venery, and a keenness and endurance, both on horseback and foot, which is refreshing to those of us who deplore the luxury and 'fashion' which has crept into the chase. The Bilsdale, which has perhaps more low country than the usual run of moorland territories, hunt the whole of Bilsdale—a valley about fifteen miles long, consisting of moor and wood. The good low country lies at both ends of the valley itself, specially good on the Upsall and Thirsk side, where they are joined by the Hurworth and Sinnington, and a little at Broughton, where they march with the Cleveland.

The Bilsdale boast as their first Master the Duke of Buckingham, whose epoch as M.F.H. was in the middle of the seventeenth century. His Grace was most popular in Bilsdale, and was worshipped by the moorland farmers. He hunted, besides Bilsdale, all Farndale, Bransdale and part of what is now the Sinnington country.

This Duke was the second of his line, the famous Court favourite in the time of Charles II. Although possibly not setting the highest moral standard, his shortcomings were common faults in the fast age in which he lived. He was a sportsman, loving horse

and hound, and able to ride with the best of 'em, and this commended him to the Yorkshire Tykes amongst whom he settled.

About two miles from Chopgate (the metropolis of Bilsdale) is Buckingham Stone, marking the place at which a fox was killed after a very severe run of some four hours' length. The Duke and his huntsman, Forster by name, were the only two who got to the end, and both the Duke's and his huntsman's horses died from exhaustion, so says tradition. The following is another tradition regarding the Duke recorded in an old manuscript in the editor's possession :

Near to the Checkers Inn at Slapestones, Osmotherly, there stood until a few years ago a cottage in which there lived, many years since, one Isaac Haw, who in his day did hunt the fox with George Villiers, and many a queer story did he use to tell. Here be one :

There lived on the moor, not over an hour's ride from Kirbymoorside, one Betty Scaife, who had a daughter Bett, a good-like wench as one could meet in a day's ride. It fell out that on a certain day, George, riding by, did happen to see young Betty half stript and washing of her arms and breast. So taken was he with the maiden's charms, that he settled there and then to make her his mistress. Finding she was alone, her mother having gone to the town, he made naught ado, but put up his horse and entered. . . . Let that be as it may, she did come to be his mistress and for long was so. But she having a dream bade him come no more, she at that time forecasting the very time and death he would die, which did take such hold upon him that he rode away and never saw her again, and surely all she had dreamt did truly come to pass.

Of Haw it be said the last time that he and the rakeless scamp did ever ride together, George said : " Haw, I do by

my soul believe that you would ride to Hell and inside too if Reynard took that way." "I'd ride anywhere you rode, your Grace," said Haw. "Why then, I'll tell you what," says his Grace, "as thou an' me won't have many years to live together, I challenge thee when I am dead and thou art dead, to meet me on the moor, and hunt every time the devil gives us a holiday. What sayest thou?" And Haw, being a little in drink at the time, agreed it should be so, and then George did vanish from his sight, and Haw galloped home—sobered with fear, knowing it had been a spirit he had ridden alongside of, but at that time not knowing his Grace was lying dead. There be those, whose word has been handed down to us, who swear to having seen these two a-hunting of a spirit fox with a spirit pack of hounds of a moonlight night. I know one who hath in memory a song of these two, but it be so desperate and blasphemous that for very fear of injuring the chance of our soul's salvation I do forbear to give it.

The Duke's memory is still kindly cherished amongst Bilsdale sportsmen. He died from the effects of a chill caught while digging out a fox in Bilsdale.[1]

In those old days it was always the custom to read out the list of the meets of the Bilsdale fox-hounds in Church on Sundays, the parson doing so from the pulpit.

Amongst the celebrated Masters of the old-established pack since the Duke's time, in the eighteenth century was W. Garbutt, known as Hunter Garbutt, whose sons were hunting with the Bilsdale when Mr. Lowndes had them. Hunter was a marvellous man, uncommonly fond of hunting. On one occasion he and his friends had a great run, from Arncliffe Wood to Carlton, and on to Broughton and

[1] For the history of the Bilsdale see *England's Oldest Hunt*, by the Editor.

Stokesley. Here they lost the fox, but after such a good run, and also as it was a Saturday and market day at Stokesley, they pulled in to have some refreshment for man and horse and talk over the run. They had many glasses of gin and water, and eventually set out to ride home at about 11.30 p.m. It was nearing midnight when they arrived at Clay Bank, near Broughton. It was a beautiful night, and they were jogging comfortably enough, when they suddenly got on the line of a fox, which had crossed the road in front of them a short time before, out of Hoggarth Wood. Away went the hounds, followed by the Master and his friends in great glee. They ran hard to Broughton Banks and Busby Wood, to Swainby, and on nearly to Potto, where they killed their fox at two o'clock Sunday morning. Thanks to the gin, they had forgotten the day of the week.

The Bilsdale country then, rich in tradition and wonderfully sporting, was taken over by Harry Lowndes in 1897 and hunted by him, to the greatest satisfaction of the members and farmers residing in the country, for three seasons. He started by having the hitherto trencher-fed hounds kennelled at the back of his house, and with the help of John Boyes as first whip and kennel huntsman, the hounds were subjected to kennel discipline, and exercised regularly, three times a day, by the Master himself. He took an active part in all the kennel work, and soon brought his hounds up to a pitch of excellence never seen before in the Yorkshire dales, and impossible with the system of

trencher-feeding, by which uniformity can never be attained.

Everywhere he went the energetic young M.F.H. met that very hearty welcome which the Tyke invariably extends to a sportsman. He soon proved his heart and soul to be in the chase, and saw local covert owners, farmers and keepers, making himself popular with all classes, passing 'the time of day' to one and all, and having a cheery word for everyone. Foxes increased, as also did the Hunt exchequer. He was also supported from outside his country by many friends, which was most gratifying and acceptable to him, as, like the famous Parson Jack Russell, he was not too well represented at his bankers. He bred his own hounds and made large drafts in the old pack, buying a number suitable to the country.

The Bilsdale M.F.H. also hunted regularly with the neighbouring packs—the Hurworth, South Durham, Cleveland and Sinnington—and occasionally with the Zetland and Lord Middleton's. The editor, in his book *England's Oldest Hunt*, writes thus of him at this time:

> He proved himself a martyr to the sport, and everything connected with it; and what is more, he showed the Cleveland, the Hurworth and South Durham fellows that whatever his cattle might be, his heart was in the right place, and they must go hard and straight when hounds ran with a good scent if they would catch the Master of the Bilsdale.
>
> It is not inferred that he was in the least a jealous rider, but when hounds were running he must be in the first flight;

nothing stopped him. To the present day they will show you in Bilsdale tremendous places he went over, and few were the stone walls which turned him. A bold rider and full of determination, he seemed able to lift his horses over the biggest of places.

There is no doubt that when in Yorkshire Mr. Lowndes showed some of the most wonderful runs enjoyed in the county. He loved his hounds and he loved hunting. Nor was his wife less enthusiastic. It was no uncommon thing to see Mrs. Lowndes taking out puppies in the perambulator with her children, and giving them an airing together.

It is of interest to note here that when *Baily's Magazine* about this time invited votes throughout England and Ireland to decide which were the twelve best amateur huntsmen of the day, the Master was among the chosen dozen.

It was when Master of the Bilsdale that the following 'Fox-hunter's Creed' was dedicated to him by his great friend Mr. T. J. Young, ex-M.F.H. of the Haydon Hounds, and this was his standard during this his first Mastership of Fox-hounds:

THE CREED, OR FOX-HUNTER'S FAITH

To be set to music, and sung on occasions of great solemnity

Article I.—Let every man present himself at the meeting-place, sober, suitably clothed, and in good time. He that rideth his hunter steadily to the fixture is better than he that useth a covert hack. He that useth a bicycle, or tandem, or motor-car, or any manner of machine, let him be accursed.

Article II.—Every man shall at the meet salute and speak words of comfort to the huntsman and whippers-in. He shall also count and examine the hounds. He shall then salute his friends. He that shall say, "It will be a bad scenting day," let him be accursed.

Article III. It is lawful and right that those of experience shall carefully give explanation and encouragement to all young persons and instruct them by word and deed at all times, so that fox-hunting shall continue in the land from generation to generation. He that thinketh he knoweth, but knoweth not, let him be accursed.

Article IV.—Every man shall remember that the ground he passes over is not all his own property. He that useth not due care, let him be accursed.

Article V.—He that leapeth or breaketh fences unnecessarily, let him be accursed. He that talketh loudly or often during the day, let him be accursed. He that weareth an apron or mackintosh on wet days, let him be damned. He that rideth over or hurteth any hound, let him be everlastingly damned.

Article VI.—If it be possible, let every true believer of the Faith abstain from all food or drink during the day, save only sufficient to sustain life in case of need. The whole day to be kept as a special fasting and strengthening of the mind in the Faith. He shall partake of food and drink in the evening. Verily after a good day he shall partake of a special allowance of drink.

Article VII.—Accursed be he that goeth home of his own free will before hounds do.

Article VIII.—He that killeth or taketh a fox by any means save by hunting, let him be accursed. Yea, let him be everlastingly damned. May his dwelling become desolate and his possessions a desert. May his soul be filled with bitterness, and his body with pain.

Article IX.—He that believeth these articles and doeth them let his life be long.

Article X.—May the scarlet never be brought into dishonour.

In November 1897 the Master opened his first season with the Bilsdale with a meet at Carlton-in-Cleveland. A large field turned out to welcome the new M.F.H., a contingent of the Hurworth and

Cleveland putting in an appearance. A fox in the Busby Hall covert provided a good hunt, and another from Broughton Bank a second gallop with a kill, putting a satisfactory finish to the initiatory fixture, and the precursor of many fine days' sport. These hill foxes are wild, have to travel far for their food, and know no artificiality, so that they take a deal of catching, though scent as a rule serves well. The following account of a useful hunt appeared in *The Field* on December 3rd, 1897 :

> The Bilsdale Hounds, which have been enjoying first-rate sport lately, met at Over-Silton, and after partaking of the hospitality of Mr. Lawson, of the Manor House, a move was made for Spring plantation, where hounds found a fox of the right sort. No sooner were the hounds in covert than the fox broke away in the direction of Kepwick Mill, then over a real stiff country to Limekiln House, on the Hambledon Hills. Here, turning right-handed, he ran across a beautiful line of sound moor past Steeple Cross, and leaving Thirsk reservoir on the right, aimed as if for Boltby, but turning right-handed again, they raced away across Ravensthorpe Moor through Cowesby Wood, and on to Kepwick village, which they left on the right, away on to Landmouth Wood, which they ran through without checking. Running on to Cotcliff Wood, our fox was headed and turned for Fenton and on to Winton, from there to Deighton and on to Welbury, where hounds killed this gallant fox. The run lasted from twelve o'clock to 5.15, hounds hunting all the time although scent was indifferent. It may be looked upon as a record run in any country, although similar runs have been seen in the Bilsdale country, with these grand moorland foxes.

It was the rule with many moorland packs in Yorkshire for a man, before being made a recognised member of the inner circle of the Hunt, to kiss or

lay his hand on a hunting-horn and swear loyalty to foxes and fox-hunting.[1] The moorland farmers following hounds always kept religiously to their old rules, one being that the first up at a kill could claim the brush, which was much valued and jealously ridden for.

In the early days a good deal of drinking went on after a day's hunting. One of the quaintest customs which was still continued to a certain extent during Harry Lowndes' Mastership was the following : After a good hunt had been enjoyed, they all adjourned to the nearest inn. The fox's pads were placed in a horn of punch, which was then ladled out by the Master, and each member drank to the health of ' His Majesty ' (the fox) amidst view-holloas and great enthusiasm. Many of these old bucks were wont to draw out a pad with their teeth and give it a shake, this calling forth a loud tally-ho from the company.

If the enthusiasm of a member should fail to be great enough for him to imbibe part of the fox as well as hunt him, he was fined sixpence, which went into a common fund for more liquor. In the Whitby neighbourhood it was customary for the fox's liver to be cut out and put into a jug of beer, whilst in Farndale, another moorland country adjoining Bilsdale, when the local pack killed a fox in Rosedale (years ago, that is) a gallon of ale was poured through

[1] Rule 1 of the old Cleveland Hunt Club runs : "That no person be admitted to be a member of the Club but such as shall first publicly lay his right hand upon a hunting-horn and declare himself no enemy to fox-hunting, harriers, etc."—Editor.

the fox's mask and allowed to drip off Reynard's tongue before it was drunk.

The following excellent Bilsdale runs are entered in the Master's diary for 1898 :

On Wednesday, Jan. 19th.—Landslip was the rendezvous and the Plantation the first draw, two good runs being the result, one of a fast forty minutes to ground, and the other a hunting run of an hour and a half the same way, but at the end of the latter the Master sent for his terriers, although it was getting dusk. By the time they arrived it was too dark to ride, so they bolted the fox and followed on foot. The hounds raced away on a rare scent, and were soon lost. Eventually news came of them on Carlton Bank top, where they had killed and eaten their fox.

January 22nd, 1898.—The run scored to-day will long be remembered by one and all in the dale. It happened in an unusual way. I was exercising hounds Monday morning in the field adjoining the kennels, when the Carlton postman, returning from his morning rounds, reported that he had seen a fox cross the road not five minutes before.

Although hunting at Limekiln House the following day, I ordered my horse immediately, and laid hounds on, an exceptionally fine run being the result. The hounds were about ten minutes behind the fox, but hunted him well with an indifferent scent across the plough land. They soon got on better terms with him, and ran him smartly by Carlton village, and on to Faceby Moor. Crossing the park, they ran on to Faceby village and through the vicarage garden, turned left-handed on to Carlton Bank ; leaving Whorl Wood on the right, they ran to Scugdale, and from there to Raincliff Wood, which they ran through without checking and away to Swainby. With Swainby on the right, they passed the old Castle, and ran on to Potto. They crossed the railway, and leaving Sexhow Station on the right, they ran to Hutton Rudby, passing through Lord Falkland's Park and over the road to Hilton. On over the River Leven, they then turned and ran to Newby, where I, and the one man with me, was obliged to give in. Our horses were completely done. My

gallant old grey came down at the last fence, and Ben Kitching's horse was going dead lame. The hounds were left running hard, with their fox a field in front of them. They killed him in the road a mile ahead. They ran from 10.30 till 3 o'clock, the point being 12 miles, and hounds touched, beside their own, the Hurworth and a good deal of the Cleveland. I walked my horse, and by inquiry eventually rejoined hounds, and took them safely to kennels.

The Master had as one of his whippers-in the most celebrated hunting character Bilsdale had ever bred—to wit, Bobbie Dawson. He had whipped-in to the pack for forty-five years, and retired at the end of Harry Lowndes' Mastership. He was known to every M.F.H. in Yorkshire, and was a quaint old man who lived only for hunting. Just before the old chap went to earth, he asked the doctor to lean over him and listen if he could hear a fox barking in his heart. There were many tales told about the old man, who was of the same type as his friend, the more widely known and more celebrated Jack Parker, huntsman to the Sinnington. 'Awd Bob,' as Dawson was called, was very familiar with the Earl of Feversham (his landlord), Lord Zetland, Captain Johnstone and other Masters.

Once, when the Sinnington met at Duncombe Park, Bobbie turned up. He had been to Helmsley Market on the previous day, and had had a drop or two of gin, his favourite medicine. The result was he was very thirsty on arriving at Duncombe Park. The butler was instructed to give the old man admission, and he was brought into the midst of

the house-party, which included the late Marquis of Londonderry, the late Viscount Helmsley, and several other well-known Nimrods.

"Good morning, gentlemen all," said Bob. "Ah say, Lord Feversham, could ya send yan o' them there idle devils in t'hall fur a glass o' yall? Ah's desperate dry."

The ale was brought, and after Bobbie had dispatched it, he condescendingly said:

"Noo, young gentlemen, Ah deean't know you, but Ah'll shak hands wi' ya all an' hoap you're all fox-hunters."

Bobbie once found outside a jet hole, with which the moors abounded, a keeper's coat and a dead poisoned fox. The man had gone down the hole and got lost in one of the many subterranean passages, the damp making his matches useless. Bobbie was so disgusted at the keeper poisoning the foxes that he said nothing about it, and left the keeper to meet his deserts as a vulpicide! However, a search-party discovered the man the following day, more dead than alive.

Harry Lowndes and that good sportsman, 'Nimrod' Pearson, so long secretary of the Sinnington, promoted a testimonial for the old man, in the form of a substantial sum of money, which helped him in his declining days. Just before he died he walked sixteen miles over the moors to the Sinnington puppy show, and after the show was over, trudged home to his dale cottage. He passed

away a nonagenarian, and was buried in Bilsdale.[1] His funeral was unique. John Garbutt, in his scarlet coat, drove the hearse. Immediately behind walked Bobbie's grey cob (a present given him by Mr. Selby Lowndes in the past) bearing the old whip's coat, cap, boots and spurs. The late Mr. Wilson Horsfall, M.F.H., and his huntsman followed on horseback, the members of the Hunt riding behind them. When the coffin was lowered into the grave, the Master placed on the foot of it the coat, cap and boots that Bobbie had worn during his last hunt, and standing over the grave, sounded the ' Gone away ' on his horn.

The following remarkable experience is recorded in the Master's diary :

February 14th, 1898.—Meeting at Cowesby ; a large field turned out. A fox found in Cowesby Wood went to ground after a short scurry, and could not be evicted. Another fox found in the moor proved to be a vixen, and was soon left. It was getting late and most of the field had gone home, but I went on and put hounds into White Scar as a last hope. A fox went away in full view, providing one of the longest runs I have ever seen. The fox ran over the moors to Hunter's End and on to Hambleton, away to Boltby Scar, on to Upsall Castle, back over the moors to Cowesby, and on to Kepwick by Limekiln House, and over some of the roughest and most difficult ground in Yorkshire. Though it was long after dark, and hounds had been running over three hours, the little band of seven remained with me and we stuck to them, and killed and brushed the fox at 10.30 p.m. Needless to say, though familiar with the ground in daylight, we were unfamiliar with it in the pitch dark, and were only able to find our way home with the help of the upland farmers and an ancient lantern.

An account of another good run, that took place

[1] Dawson died June 17, 1902.—Editor.

on Friday, December 30th, 1898, appeared in *The Field*:

The Bilsdale enjoyed an extraordinary day's sport. The fixture was at Boltby Scar, the Scar being the first draw. A fox was found almost immediately; breaking away at once, he ran to the Guttoff Wood and on to Hambleton Hills; left-handed he ran to Ardenside and on to Hornby; from here he turned right-handed and crossed to Morton Gill, and right away by the White Mare to Boltby village, which he left on the right, and on to Mount St. John; from there to Ravensthorpe and on to Cowesby; crossing the valley, he ran across to New Buildings and on to Kirby Knowle by Knayton, and nearly to Thirsk; where the gallant fox gave up his brush after running for five hours. The Master's horse, and hounds, were unable to return to kennels till the following day. The Master was left entirely alone with his pack of fifteen couple, all of whom were up except one. He took them to Hawnby and put up at the inn, returning home the following day. The first whip, who nearly reached the end, gave in, and arrived home at eleven o'clock after a ride of twenty-eight miles. The distance these old moorland greyhound foxes can travel is marvellous.

The Bilsdale M.F.H. was seen regularly with the Hurworth and Cleveland, and took a lot of beating when on the grey already referred to. He had bought him from a job-master at Wells for £30 during the time he was M.H. there; rode him for five years, and then sold him to the late Mr. Horsfall for £100. Mr. Horsfall rode him several seasons, and then sent him to York Repository with his stud, and put the horse's name down as 'Selby Lowndes' in the catalogue. He was bid £180 for him, but declined.

Another famous hunter was a hard puller the

Master bought cheap from the late James Darrell of Ayton, near Scarborough. He rode him two seasons, hunting his own hounds and with the Hurworth. On one occasion when riding this horse he jumped the boundary stell dividing the Hurworth country from the South Durham, which caused a good deal of comment at the time. He sold this hunter for a big price to Mr. Pease of Darlington, and the beast ran away with his new master and nearly broke his neck. Mr. Pease mounted a friend, with the same result, and the horse became notorious. Some time afterwards the Hon. Claud Hamilton Russell came across Harry Lowndes and mentioned to him that while staying in Darlington he had driven behind the fastest and best horse ever placed in the shafts of a cab. "On getting out of the cab," he said, "I inquired about the horse, and the cabby replied, 'Don't know 'im, sir? Why, we calls him "Selby," the most celebrated runaway ever seen in these parts.'"

The Bilsdale M.F.H. was very fond of the South Durham Hounds, and hunted with them on Fridays and enjoyed excellent sport in the country. The Master, Lord Boyne (in those days the Hon. Gustavus Hamilton Russell), had as his followers a field of really excellent fellows. 'The country is wild as regards uncultivated land' (says our diarist), 'carries scent, and foxes are very plentiful. The South Durham Hounds are excellent in their work, and can hunt and kill a fox handsomely.' On

one occasion the Bilsdale M.F.H. stayed with the late Lord Londonderry at Wynyard Park for a few days' hunting and a shoot, taking one of his own horses for the hunting. He was one of a very large house-party for whom there was endless entertainment, including theatricals and other amusements. The fixture of hounds was fairly near the Park, and those who hunted were driven there in carriages with postilions.

Lowndes had been careful to take a good horse, which carried him bang up with hounds all the way through a great run. On the way back Lord Shrewsbury, the late Lord Londonderry's brother-in-law, took such a fancy to the horse that he bought it for a high figure before they reached Wynyard Park. Thus the Bilsdale M.F.H. returned to Carlton with only saddle and bridle. Some time afterwards he met his Lordship and asked how the horse had turned out. Lord Shrewsbury said he had hunted him regularly all the winter without a fall, and had then driven him in his coach all the summer. Although the Yorkshireman is traditionally such a hard nut to crack as far as horses go, the Master always did very well indeed with his horses, and sold many in the county.

Regarding the Cleveland Hounds he says: 'Squire Wharton, the Master, is a most popular man, and has a really good pack of hounds. He has spent a great deal of time and money in bringing them up to a high standard, and has a

most melodious voice and nice way with hounds when hunting them. The Cleveland country is, for the most part, extremely rough, and much like Bilsdale in many parts, but has a very nice stretch of vale near Stokesley. It is a good scenting country, with plenty of foxes, and the followers consist of some good fellows and many topping farmers of the yeomen type.'

And of the Hurworth and its late Master he wrote: 'The Hurworth Hounds hunt a very sporting if limited country, nearly all vale and a good deal of it clay. Mr. W. Forbes, the Master, is a typical fox-hunter and a rare good sportsman. We have recently had a dispute over the boundaries of our respective countries, which caused a considerable amount of talk. This does not in any way alter my opinion that Mr. Forbes is one of the best sportsmen I ever met. He is as keen as mustard, and devoted to fox-hunting, and everything in connection with the noble cause. Although sixty-six years of age, he hunts hounds himself three days a week, and is often out with other packs the other three days. He always hacks to the most distant fixtures, and never wears an overcoat no matter what the weather is like.'

Harry Lowndes also hunted with the Sinnington Hounds. The late Mr. Penn C. Sherbrooke was then Master, and H. S. L. recorded the following impressions: 'It is a rare sporting country adjoining the Bilsdale, and contains some rare sportsmen,

including dear old "Nimrod" Pearson, for so many years, and still, their "Scribe." A hunter-breeding farmer called Jack Brown, of Marton Common, a real sporting fellow, has mounted me several times, and I stayed with the celebrated Mr. Tom Parrington, one of the finest sportsmen England ever produced. Mr. Parrington was the first man to start hound shows and horse-jumping at shows, and was the founder of Peterborough Hound Show. He was a M.F.H. for many years, the finest judge of port in England, and the best company. One night, when I was dining and staying with him, a young fellow dining at the time asked, when the port wine was being circulated, if he could smoke. "Yes, do so, sir," was the reply; "but go to the kitchen and I will send you some gin and water." He was always very particular about his port.'

In Harry Lowndes' day with the Bilsdale it was the standing order every Sunday afternoon to meet at different friends' houses alternately, drink port wine, and discuss sport in particular and the affairs of the nation in general.

In the old days, and even at the present time, the Yorkshire dalesmen were, and are, highly superstitious. The Bilsdale M.F.H. writes in his diary that he frequently heard weird stories, pregnant with superstition and lore. They were told him in all good faith, and he had to keep a straight face while he was listening. Many of these stories related to Peg Humphrey, an old woman who lived at East Moors, and was a source of great trouble to the Bilsdale

sportsmen. She was considered learned in the black arts, and was able to transform herself into a hare, in which form she gave the Bilsdale many a long and hopeless run. Peg was supposed to be able to practise her black arts on all against whom she had a spite, and to cast spells on those with whom she felt embittered. It always caused the field the greatest consternation, when they thought they were running her in the form of a hare. On one occasion, as told by Bobbie Dawson, they had a desperate encounter with old Peg, which will not be forgotten in the dale for many a year.

They found a hare on Rowper Moor, and for four hours, without tiring, she led the field over moor and dale. From time to time she out-distanced them, but scorning the thought of leaving hounds as long as they were running, they scrambled on, and watched and waited till her circles made it again possible for them to join in the chase. They had come to the conclusion during such a wonderful hunt that it must be no ordinary hare, but old Peg, and the finish to the run put the matter beyond a doubt. Puss made for East Moors. They still followed, wrapped up in the fine run they were having, and faster and faster the witch hare sped. At last Peg's farmyard was reached, and through the drain hole into the cow-house she fled. The building was fastened from inside, so they smashed it open, and found lying on the straw, not the hare, but old Peg herself, trembling in every limb !

"Oh," she exclaimed, "I have been tending the stock; come in and have a glass of ale."

To Bobbie and old Isaac she spake naught, but she 'charmed' the latter's ale, and immediately after leaving he complained of feeling ill. Though Dr. Ness was called in from Helmsley, he could do nothing to save the old fellow, who was convinced he had been bewitched. He died very shortly after, and old Bobbie always wondered he had not met with the same fate. Superstition of this kind is by no means confined to Yorkshire.

It was lucky for the Bilsdale M.F.H. that he did not share in the superstitious fears of some of his neighbours, for many were the long and solitary homeward rides he had across the open moors, with only perhaps a sheep-track to follow, dark as pitch, with a tired pack of hounds, and possibly snowing heavens high.

He never seemed to feel the cold, or was known to wear a pair of gloves, and hated wraps. Yet he has worn well, and at the present time he has been a M.F.H. longer, for his age, than any Master in England, being fifty-three years old and having had hounds for thirty-four years. During these thirty-four years, in all weathers, through good times and bad times, he never missed a day's hunting through ill health. He has, of course, had falls innumerable, and personifies the sportsman for whom Egerton Warburton asked:

> Oh! give me the man to whom naught comes amiss,
> One horse or another, that country or this;
> Through falls and bad starts undauntedly still
> Rides up to the motto: 'Be with them I will.'

He has never been very studious of his personal appearance, apart from the dignity due to the chase, and hardly ever wears an overcoat, maintaining that the temperature of the body and an equal glow of animal spirits are better than additional clothing. As regards physic, Epsom salts from the kennels, the same as used for the hounds, has been his only 'dope.'

In 1898 he was offered the Sinnington Hounds, Mr. Sherbrooke having resigned; but as there was still another year to run, by his agreement, with the Bilsdale, he was unable to accept this very tempting offer.

The following is an account of a morning's cubbing with Lord Middleton's hounds, taken from his diary in September, 1899:

Went to have a look at Lord Middleton's hounds, which were cubbing at Gilling Castle at 7.30 the following day. Started the night before at 9 p.m. and rode across the moors during the night, arriving at Gilling at three o'clock the next morning, having covered forty miles. Stayed with Mr. Walter Pearson. Found old Will Grant, the huntsman, sitting up waiting with Mr. Pearson until I arrived, smoking cigars and drinking port wine. I joined the party, and we talked hunting until 5.15, when we retired to bed. Up again at seven o'clock. Hounds met at eight, but owing to a very thick fog, we did not hunt till 9.30. Found an old fox and ran hard for thirty minutes, and killed him handsomely, all the field lost except myself; hearing Grant was very quiet I stuck to him, and saw the fun. Grant let the hounds break up the fox without getting off his horse; a queer little fellow, so short in the leg that he had a great job to mount his horse, once he got off. A nice huntsman, but too quiet, and a rare pack of working hounds. Rode forty-five miles home after hunting.

The Bilsdale, in Harry Lowndes' time, occasionally extended their country right away to Whitby, some forty miles from the kennels. When it was arranged to hunt that district (by invitation) the hounds were taken the day before, and as a rule stayed several days, and had a most festive time. They were put up free—horses, hounds and whole establishment—by that fine sportsman, the late Mr. David Smallwood, ex-M.F.H. of the defunct Eskdale Fox-hounds. The following is an account of a day in this country which appeared in *The Whitby Gazette* :

That the Bilsdale hounds have gained considerable popularity in Whitby and neighbourhood was amply demonstrated on Tuesday morning, when the celebrated pack met at the top of Flowergate. There was a very large and representative meet, and the sporting Master of the hunt, Mr. Selby Lowndes, could not be but gratified by the very cordial reception he received from all present. Amongst the horsemen of over 150 were such good men as Mr. Smallwood, ex-M.F.H., Messrs. R. B. Turton, Wrightson, Carr, Ward, Marshall, Frankland, Elders, Woodwark, Yeoman, Young, Thompson, Hutchinson, Herbert and Miss Attlay, Miss Greenwell and many others. Hounds moved off shortly after 10.30 for Galley Hills, where hounds soon had a fox on foot. They ran through Aislaby Moors to Cockmoor plantation, on to Gontcher Wood ; thence he ran on to Tapsom Folly, then turned right-handed to Hare Stones, thence for Doslin banks, on to Cote bank and thence to the Lamplands ; finding hounds close to him, he popped to ground in Grosmont slag heap, but Mr. Smallwood and his terrier had him out and going again. He ran to the flats to Westonby away by Barton Houl and on to Egton, where hounds rolled him over in the open after a first-rate run of an hour and 50 minutes, every hound being

up. The brush was presented to Miss Attlay, and the mask to Mr. Turton. Everyone was delighted with the sport, and it is the wish of one and all for Mr. Selby Lowndes to bring his beautiful little pack again shortly into this very sporting district.

The Bilsdale M.F.H. was very fond of the wild, rough moorland hunting, and considers it was the best training in the world for a young sportsman to learn the mysteries of venery. He showed sport in all parts of the country, and was backed and admired as a sportsman by one and all. He played the sporting game all round, and the days he did not hunt he spent in shooting, several of his friends having good grouse moors or pheasant preserves. During the summer months he passed his time nursing his country, playing cricket for Carlton-in-Cleveland, which club he started and encouraged until the members became very formidable opponents. Fishing, badger-digging, and otter hunting appealed to him, but in spite of all these varied occupations, he always maintained that life really began on September 1st.

Harry Lowndes did a considerable amount of trap pigeon shooting during his Bilsdale Mastership, and won many prizes. He also indulged in a little cock-fighting at times on the quiet. Many amusing incidents happened in the hunting-field which, perhaps, had better not appear in print. These relate to the fine flow of language for which he has always had a reputation. The old Bilsdale farmers

used to say, "It is wonderful what eddication does for eloquence!" In short, he had a fine vocabulary of cuss words which meant nothing.

The following story is told of his prowess in the drinking line, when shooting in Cumberland with a house-party.

They all stayed the week-end at the Gilsland Hotel, and Harry Lowndes, who was then twenty-six years of age and up to most things, was backed against another of the party as to who could consume the greatest number of glasses of beer during the day. Harry's opponent drank fifty glasses, and retired to bed for two days. Harry lowered no less than eighty-six glasses, and so easily won the £5 wager, and furthermore, shot driven grouse the day following this feat. When asked years afterwards how it had affected him, he replied that "though it had happened sixteen years ago, he had seen black specks ever since."

The Bilsdale M.F.H. was once asked if he thought the fox-hound was a distinct species of dog from the beginning of things, and did he, in fact, come out of the Ark?

"How could he?" returned Harry Lowndes promptly. "Did not a brace of foxes come out alive?"

When his third year with the Bilsdale was approaching its end, he decided, though with real sorrow, to take a more fashionable country with an increased number of days' hunting; so in May 1900

he resigned, to the regret of everyone, and that of the Yorkshire farmers especially.

Full of life and vitality, gay and free, with an utter disregard of what the world thought of him, he left Yorkshire for East Kent, with a host of friends behind him.

CHAPTER VII

THE EAST KENT HUNT: ITS HISTORY AND EARLY MASTERS

East Kent.—Distinctive collar—buff cloth. Evening dress—scarlet, buff silk collar, white silk facings, white washing waistcoat, black knee breeches, black silk stockings. Hunt buttons.

Master (1900), H. W. Selby Lowndes, Esq., Fox Lodge, Lyminge, S.O., Kent. Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, S. W. Harries, Esq., Bridge Place, Canterbury. Hon. Secretary, Poultry and Damage Funds, J. E. Churchill, Esq., Thorndean, Swingfield, near Dover. Huntsman, the Master. Whipper-in and K.H., Bert Savage; 2nd, John Cody. Forty-six couple of hounds, unmarked. Kennels, Elham, Canterbury. Days of Meeting: Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Motors not objected to if halted at a reasonable distance from the meet.

The country extends about 24 miles east to west and 18 miles North to South in East Kent. On the N.W. it adjoins the Tickham; the sea lies on the S. and E. The fences are most frequently stake-and-binder, or post-and-rail, an occasional ditch or small brook in the Vale country. About half is plough and woodland, the rest grass and downland. The grass increases every year. There is an excellent piece of Vale country called the Ashford Vale. A short-legged, active little horse is most suitable. Best centres, Canterbury—whence meets of the West Kent and Tickham are accessible—Folkestone and Dover. The Master is guaranteed £1,000 yearly, with kennels and stables and Hunt servants' cottages, rent free, and a poultry fund. No fixed sub., but £15 15*s.* and a donation to the poultry fund is the minimum expected from those who hunt. Members

subscribe at least £20 : £1. The hounds belong to the country.

The Hunt probably dates from the eighteenth century, but records are wanting prior to Sir H. Oxenden's time.

Former Masters : Sir H. Oxenden, 1814–28. Lord Fitz-Walter, 1828–32. Mr. F. Brockman, 1832–70. The Earl of Guilford, 1870–79. Mr. F. J. Mackenzie, 1879–81. Mr. W. H. White, 1881–82. Mr. E. R. Sworder, 1882–89. Captain F. Fitzroy, 1889–90. Mr. C. W. Prestcott-Westcar, 1890–93. Mr. A. B. Worthington, 1893–94. Mr. L. E. Bligh, 1894–98. Mr. Wilfrid Baker White, 1898–1900.

Such are the particulars given in *Baily's Hunting Directory* of the East Kent Hunt, of which Harry Lowndes became Master in the spring of 1900. The following is a report of the general meeting of the supporters of the East Kent Hunt which resulted in his appointment :

A general meeting was held in February 1900 at the Royal Fountain Hotel, Canterbury, under the Presidency of Admiral Rice. Amongst those present were the Earl of Guilford, Messrs. Furdy, Rev. F. Timins, C. Kingsford, E. Kelsey, Crowhurst, Williamson, Sladden, Vipars, Croft, Jennings, Price, Collard, Allfrey, Hobbs, Shedden, Banks, Bishop and others. Letters of apology for non-attendance were read from Messrs. L. Hardy, M.P., Miller and J. Howard. The hon. sec. reported that the deficit had been wiped off by the guarantors, also that Mr. W. White, who had hunted the country for two years agreed upon, wrote saying that he would continue for £1,200 a year. This was put to the meeting, and not carried.

A vote of thanks was passed to Mr. White for hunting the country. The chairman then read the following communication from Mr. White :

'I beg to acknowledge with best thanks the letter conveying the thanks of the Hunt for my past services, and

I am very much obliged to Mr. Hardy and Admiral Rice for proposing the same. It is not in mortals to command success. I have failed, but it has not been for the want of trying.'

The chairman announced they had received one or two offers from gentlemen willing to hunt the country. One of these, Mr. H. Selby Lowndes, appeared to be a very good sportsman, and to have had considerable experience. In the event of their being willing to accept his offer, Mr Selby Lowndes proposed giving up his Yorkshire pack, and carrying the horn himself with the East Kent. He had been down recently for three days, and hunted with their hounds, and they had all been impressed with him as a gentleman and a sportsman.

The chairman then formally proposed that this meeting of the E.K.H. accept the offer of Mr. Selby Lowndes to hunt the East Kent country three days a week for £1,100 a year, the Hunt finding kennels and stables and cottages. Mr. Hardy had written to him (the chairman) saying that he fully concurred in this proposal, and he hoped that Mr. Selby Lowndes would be unanimously appointed, and that the Hunt would give the new Master every assistance. The Rev. F. Timins seconded the proposition. The chairman said that no doubt it was a very difficult thing to kill a fox in this country, and it required a man to be always very close to his hounds.

In reply to questions, the hon. sec. then said that the hounds belonged partly to Mr. White and partly to the country. Some years ago Mr. Brockman and the late Mr. White had agreed to find £600 to purchase the hounds. Mr. Brockman appealed to the country and raised his half of the money, but Mr. White advanced £300 of his own, on the understanding that the country should eventually pay him back.

So Harry Lowndes found himself Master of the East Kent Hunt, which dates from the eighteenth century, though records are lacking prior to Sir Henry Oxenden's time, viz. 1814. Despite the paucity

FREDERICK BROCKMAN, ESQ., M.F.H.
MASTER OF THE EAST KENT FROM 1832—1870.

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of documentary evidence, it is certain the Hunt was in existence prior to that date as a trencher-fed pack, and was hunted from 1810 to 1814 by the celebrated Frank Pettit, of the Bell Inn, Hythe, who during the summer months sent his hounds out to walk. Mr. John Taylor, of Pedlinge, was one who took a few couple; Parson Dickens, Rector of Adisham, kept a few more; and Mr. Quinhampton, of Scene Farm, the remainder. The farmers at that time subscribed much more liberally to the pack than the landed proprietors, the greater part of the total subscription coming from the tillers of the soil.

Sir Henry Oxenden, who lived at Broome Park, in more recent years owned by the late Lord Kitchener, had a noted pack of spayed bitches, his idea probably being that the freedom from sexual feeling rendered them more efficient in the keeping on the line of a fox and driving hard enough to run into him.

Sir Henry hunted the country for fourteen years, and was succeeded by Lord Fitzwalter and then Mr. Deedes for brief periods, until 1832, in which year Mr. Frederick Brockman, the seventh son of Mr. James Drake Brockman, of Beachborough, entered upon his long and memorable era of thirty-eight years' control.

In spite of many difficulties and sundry discouragements, Mr. Brockman succeeded in not only establishing a useful pack of hounds but also what

is equally important—in creating a fine spirit and encouraging the love of fox-hunting among the farmers, villagers and indeed all classes in East Kent. He found it necessary to import foxes, as there had been a scarcity in these early days. He showed some excellent sport, carrying the horn himself, and managing the country with signal success. He was backed up well by the farmers, who subscribed handsomely—some of them no less than £100 each. Despite this, the total amount Mr. Brockman received for hunting the country five days a fortnight did not nearly reach four figures.

An amusing incident occurred to this Master one day whilst cubbing. Not being dressed exactly in orthodox costume, he was mistaken by one of his military field for a kennel servant and was offered the bribe of a crown to clap hounds on to an old dog fox that he himself had just quietly viewed away.

It is much to be regretted there were no records or hunting diaries kept by the late Mr. Brockman. He was a great wit, and dearly loved to engineer practical jokes against his friends. On one occasion he asked all his tenants to a rabbit shoot with beagles. He gave them all a drink before they started and put a little jalap into each glass. When they reached the wood, a ladder was provided, and each man made use of it in turn to ascend a tree, there to await the rabbits. The ladder was then removed until some time later, and they were left with no possible means of descent!

Mr. Brockman gave many dinner-parties to his numerous hunting farmer friends, and like a good many sportsmen of that time was a two-bottle man with his port. In April 1866 Stephen Pearce was commissioned to paint a portrait of this good sportsman, which hangs to-day at Beachborough, to which estate his nephew succeeded. The inscription at the foot of the picture reads :

> Presented by the members of the E.K.H. and other friends as a mark of respect and esteem to Frederick Brockman, who for thirty-three successive years has hunted the East Kent Country.

When Mr. Brockman was compelled to resign five years later owing to ill health, another testimonial was forthcoming which took the form of some very valuable plate.

At this period there was in East Kent a celebrated earth stopper, Tom Norris by name. He once found a poisoned vixen and rescued the three cubs. On his arrival home he discovered his wife had given birth to a little earth stopper and old Norris got her to suckle cubs, baby and all, which she did, bringing the lot up safely. A picture and account of this appeared in the old *Sporting Magazine* of the day.

Amongst those who hunted regularly with Mr. Brockman were : Messrs. Louds, John Denne, Maurice Thompson, Beds, Hobbs, Collard (Blean), Baden, Kingsnorth, John Jones, John Taylor, John Andrews, T. Startup, Bob Jennings, Tom Mount,

Colonel Montressor of Denne Hill, the Pappillons of Acrise Park, Messrs. Dadds, Sladden, D'Aeth, Hammond and the late Mr. Thompson, who hunted until he was ninety years of age.

In 1870 the late Earl of Guilford took over the pack, and hunted the country for nine years in the most lavish style, and at his own expense. He built new kennels and stables at his own home at a cost of something like £20,000, and everything else in connection with his hunting establishment was *pro rata*. He was a hard man to hounds, and acted as his own huntsman. He rode the very best of cattle, and in those pre-wire days went as straight as an arrow. He was beloved by the farmers (the landlords being little or no support to him), who presented him with a handsome testimonial when he retired from the Mastership. He hunted the country four days a week with a first whip and kennel-huntsman named Painting. His wife, the present Dowager Countess of Guilford, was an enthusiastic sportswoman, and hunted regularly with the East Kent. She was loved by all who knew her, both in and out of the hunting-field. She was a great friend of Harry Lowndes; her interest in the East Kent and its M.F.H. was such that she never failed to write to the Master wishing him success as each fresh season came round.

Lord Guilford showed good sport, though foxes were not too plentiful in his day. He was a keen fox-hunter and a rare man with his fists. He gave

'OLD NORRIS,' THE EARTH-STOPPER OF THE E.K.H.

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up the East Kent in 1879, and took the Cattistock. Three years later he met his death through a fall in the hunting-field, which was perhaps how he would have wished to have died—engaged in the sport he loved so well.

From 1879 to 1882 there were two Masters of the East Kent, to wit, Mr. Mackenzie and Captain White. These short terms of office seem to indicate how little some know of the general anxieties of managing a hunting establishment before they take on the duties.

Captain White (who was very fond of 'coping') was a fine horseman and steeplechase rider. He was once addressed by a friend:

"Hullo, old chap; I hear you keep a pack of hounds."

"No!" was the ready answer. "You are wrong. A pack of hounds keeps me."

He only remained one season, and then sent his stud of nine hunters to Tattersall's by road, a distance of seventy miles. The nine horses realised under £100 the lot.

In 1882 Mr. Sworder took over the hounds, and remained at their head for seven years, hunting hounds himself, but hardly proving quick enough when his pack required assistance; consequently he did not account for many of his foxes. He was a genial Master, a good horseman and much liked by everyone.

One day during his Mastership, while badger-digging, he nearly met his death. He was tunnelling

under a bank, and lying at full length for that purpose, when the earth fell in on top of him and he was only rescued in the nick of time. Another thirty seconds would have proved fatal. After leaving Kent in 1889, he took charge of the Hertfordshire Hounds, with which pack he remained till 1898.

Captain Fitzroy was the next Master of the East Kent. He had come from the Taunton Vale, was a first-rate sportsman, and made himself popular during his short stay of one season's duration. He died of cancer, though he had had his tongue cut out to allay the growth. He hunted a few times after the operation, and one day got 'wired up' in a field at Acrise. He tried his best to say something appropriate, but it would not come, which must have been most exasperating to his feelings.

During the next decade (1890–1900) four Masters officiated at the head of affairs, namely Messrs. Prescott-Westcar, Bligh, Worthington, and Baker White. The first-named remained three years, turning out the hunt well; but the sport was not of a high order. The late Mr. Bligh stayed four years. He was desperately addicted to hanging about in the woods, possibly because he had sustained a very bad rider's strain, and did not like going in the open country. He was perfectly happy in a dense woodland, and had a good voice to fill one, but his field naturally liked a dart in the open and he retired in 1898, and took the Minehead Harriers. Mr. Baker

White then took the Mastership, with John Hills as huntsman. The latter was a good servant and had been a first-class whip, but (as is often the case with a good whip) he never succeeded as a huntsman in such a hard country in which to kill a fox as is the East Kent. Added to this, the old man had a bad fall during his first cubbing morning, which rather knocked the grit out of him. Mr. Baker White resigned in 1900, which year saw the advent of H. W. Selby Lowndes, the present Master.

Owing to the frequent changes of Mastership during the preceding ten years and to the lack of sport, much of the interest in the Hunt had gone or was latent. Many had ceased hunting, the soldiers were indifferent and the fields were small in the extreme. Even in the Vale not more than a score of followers turned up, and in consequence the subscriptions had fallen off considerably, which was only natural. In fact, looking at the subscription list for the year previous to Mr. Selby Lowndes taking over the hounds, one sees that the guarantors had a thin time, having to pay no less than £355 over and above their annual subscription. The income from the soldiers in that year for the different regiments only amounted to £45.

It must have been most gratifying to the present Master to think that at the end of his first season the guarantors were not asked to put their hands in their pockets, and that there was a balance in hand. As a matter of fact, the guarantors have

never been called upon since. No country is more hunted over than East Kent. It can boast of a pack of fox-hounds, three packs of harriers, a pack of stag-hounds and a pack of drag, this last run by the soldiers. The Ashford Vale, in which the East Kent meet on Wednesdays, is second to none, and it has been the opinion of the officers of many regiments that the Vale was as nice a line as a man could wish to ride over. The Monday country is flat and open, with a good deal of plough, but on Fridays and Saturdays hounds are found in a country in which large woods predominate. Foxes are very strong, and take a lot of killing; and some handled by the present Master have weighed as much as 20 lbs.

Harking back for a moment to the history of the East Kent Hunt, there are two sportsmen whose names are wrapped up with the evolution of the hunt and sport and life of the country in their day. The first, Sir John Fagg of Mystole Park, appears to have been a great character. He was a keen fox-hunter in Mr. Brockman's time and a great friend of that Master's. Sir John was very fond of his wine, and one night when he came home late from a dinner-party he put his horse up and went fast asleep in one of the stables. In the morning his mother found him still asleep amongst the hay. Sir John's father, having always wanted him to be a parson, she roused him with the remark: "Your father's greatest ambition was to get you a stall in Canterbury Cathedral, but I see yours is to get one

in the stable!" Sir John was a great man with the gloves, and was a fine whip. Indeed, his mother offered to back him to box or drive four-in-hand against any nobleman's son in England.

On one occasion Sir John Fagg came out hunting on a very cold day with a huge white scarf wound round his neck. The Rev. Mr. Dickinson, of Adisham (a great hunting parson), said to him: "Seat cold, Sir John?" "No," said Sir John. "Why?" "Because I see you've got the tail of your shirt wound round your neck."

The second mighty Nimrod alluded to was the late Dr. Bishop, long a member of the E.K.H., after Mr. Brockman's era. He followed regularly in the late Lord Guilford's time, and was a quaint character of the rough-and-ready sort. He was a good surgeon, who dearly loved the knife, and in appearance he was very like Leech's picture of Facey Romford. A middle-sized, strongly-built man he was, with ginger whiskers, and like Mr. Romford, he invariably had a couple of retrievers with him. He was a good shot, and was not always particular over whose ground he went. It took a good man to best him with the gloves, and he fought many friendly battles with the late Lord Guilford, with whom he was a great favourite. In those days Waldershare was famous for the big nights they had, when the dew of vintage fell heavily, and the doctor often related to Harry Lowndes his experiences on the road when returning home from there. The

present Master very often shot with him, and finished the day's sport with whist. On one of these occasions, in the middle of an excited rubber, a supposed patient called at the surgery. The doctor was very wroth, and bolted off to attend the man. He hastily made up some medicine and produced some pills, and said: "Now, my man, take two of these pills to-night, and a dose of the medicine in the morning." The reply came: "Please, sir, it not me wot's ill; I've come for some medicine for my son." "Then let him take 'em," said the doctor, dismissing the man. "But he's broke his leg!" was the remonstrance.

The doctor was a hard man to hounds in his time, and also a good cricketer and an excellent wicket-keeper. No matter how fast the bowling, he always stood right up to the wicket. He was secretary to the East Kent Hunt for many years, and was presented with a testimonial on retiring.

On one occasion the Master, the doctor, and two friends inadvertently got into a non-smoking carriage, and all lighted cigars, much to the indignation of an irate old man, who complained bitterly, and made repeated threats of vengeance. The train ran for an hour before the first stop, and just before the station was reached, the four friends put out their smokes and directly the train slowed up the Master called the guard. As soon as he appeared they all four complained bitterly of the old gentleman having annoyed the other occupants

of the carriage by having insisted upon smoking. The old man was hustled out of the carriage by the guard, spluttering and swearing, and put into a smoker before he could make any intelligible explanation.

The doctor treated his men patients in a roughish way, especially if they were inclined to be hypochondriacs. Once when driving his rounds accompanied by the Master they came across a man who was notoriously not fond of work. He complained about his back, which had caused him to be 'on his club' for a fortnight.

The doctor holloa'd to him: "How are you, Sam?"

Sam at once began to whine that he could "scarslin hobble."

"I can soon make you better," said the doctor, who added, "Just hold the reins while I give Sam a damned good hiding."

But Sam, knowing the doctor would be as good as his word, bolted off as sound as a bell, and returned to work the following day.

The doctor died on January 14th, 1902, and was buried at Elham. He was much missed, and his death removed, not only a character, but a great-hearted Nimrod from the ranks of Kentish sportsmen.

Among the many generous supporters of the East Kent Hunt at the present day, Lord Guilford stands out prominently. The son of the 7th Earl

of Guilford, and Georgina, daughter of Sir George Chetwynd, he was born in 1876, was a lieutenant in the 4th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment and Colonel of the East Kent Yeomanry, as his father had been before him. He was the keenest of soldiers. There were few yeomanry regiments better mounted or turned out than the East Kent. Lord Guilford was most popular, both with officers and men. His lordship had quite a famous yeomanry band, which he maintained at his own expense, and brought up to a high standard of efficiency. Lord Guilford married, in 1901, Violet, eldest daughter of the late W. Hargrave Pawson, Esq., and the late Hon. Mrs. Howard, of Sibton Park, Kent. He has two sons and a daughter—Lord Francis George North, the Hon. John Montagu William North and Lady Cynthia North.

Lord Guilford resides at his Kentish seat, Waldershare Park, near Dover, which is one of those palatial mansions designed by Inigo Jones. The park, which is over 500 acres, is beautifully timbered and well stocked with deer, whilst the Waldershare coverts are always full of foxes, and the mainstay of the Monday country. Lord Guilford gives a hearty welcome to the Hunt and its followers at all times. Hounds used to be taken over to Waldershare for a week during cubbing each season, a large house-party always being invited for this week. There was hunting on the Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and shooting on the

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alternate days. Besides hunting regularly with the fox-hounds, Lord Guilford was Master of the West Street Harriers, a pack which hunted over the Monday country of the East Kent. From 1898 to 1901 his lordship showed excellent sport, and had a nice lot of hounds, the Hunt being turned out in tip-top style.

Lady Guilford was born and bred and lived all her life in an atmosphere of sport with her brothers William, John and Kim Pawson, at Shawdon Hall, in the Percy domains (Northumberland). She continued her great keenness for hunting in East Kent, and rode regularly to hounds. Her ladyship was a very fine horsewoman, and had the heaven-sent gift of perfect hands. She always rode straight to hounds, possessed a thorough knowledge of hunting, and knew more about the science of the sport than most men. She seldom left hounds till they went home, no matter what the weather might be. Her ladyship always knew what the pack was doing, took the greatest interest in the work of hounds, which, to the true sportsman and sportswoman, is an essential part of the fascination of the great winter game.

Admiral Sir Ernest Rice, K.C.B., the late popular chairman of the East Kent Hunt, was one of the old school of sportsmen, alas! so fast dying out. It would have been very difficult to find a keener chairman than he. As a shot he ranked as one of the best in the district, and always trained and broke his own retrievers. He was well known as a fine

fisherman, and went to Norway regularly to fish every year. One day the admiral went to shoot with a Mr. M——, and on arriving at the station was met by the keeper, and also fell in with another of the guns, who arrived by the same train. This latter gentleman was dressed in black, his trousers packed into long black gaiters, and wearing a quaker hat. The admiral, not liking the looks of his fellow-guest, and still less the way he carried his gun, quietly tipped the keeper to put the stranger on the extreme left of the other guns; which was done. The stranger turned out to be a rare shooter but a bad hitter; but towards three o'clock he dropped a squeaker which, however, proved a runner, so he immediately laid down his gun and ran after the bird like a greyhound. When he had captured it he asked the admiral if he had done the right thing. "Oh, yes," replied the admiral, "quite correct." The stranger did not succeed in hitting anything else, but if any of the other guns wounded a bird, he immediately dropped his gun and ran and retrieved it. Unfortunately, the admiral's place Sibertswold, near Dover, was destroyed by fire in 1920.

The late Mr. John Howard was another mainstay of the East Kent Hunt; an enthusiastic sportsman, and one who by many excellent qualities contributed in no small degree to the happiness and contentment of the rural population in the neighbourhood. He joined the East Kent Yeomanry in 1891,

and saw service as a Captain in the Imperial Yeomanry in the South African War in 1900. He was M.P. for the Faversham Division up to 1906. Sibton Park, Lyminge, was his charming Kentish seat. He married in 1896 the Hon. Emily Violet Howard, daughter of Viscount St. Vincent, and widow of W. Hargrave Pawson, of Shawdon Hall, Northumberland. The late Mr. Howard was for many years an extremely popular figure in the social and public life of the county. He was a rare man to hounds, and for two years joint-Master of the E.K.H. He owned many good hunters, and won several point-to-point races. His coverts always held foxes, whilst his shooting was of the best. Mr. Howard was the Master's nearest neighbour, and he records in his diary that " by Howard's sad death I have lost one of the best friends I ever had."

Mr. Brockman, of Beachborough Park, nephew of the late Mr. Brockman, M.F.H., is another thorough sportsman, and from the outset he has been a great supporter of the Master's. His coverts were always full of foxes, and hounds were welcome at all times. Unfortunately, hard times compelled him to let Beachborough.

CHAPTER VIII

MASTER OF THE EAST KENT HOUNDS : SEASONS 1900–1902

On the first of May, 1900, the Master started work in the East Kent country. For the first two or three months he and his wife stayed at Hythe, and here his second daughter, Dorothy Gwendolen, was born. In the middle of the summer they moved to a country house at Denton, a charming little village not far from Barham station, but so far from the kennels as to necessitate a drive of about five miles home after hunting. To avoid this the new year found them settled at Lyminge, two miles from Elham, where the kennels are. The Master began by writing to all the landowners and shooting tenants asking for their goodwill, and during the summer months called on the farmers and keepers and learned the topography of his country. He had an encouraging reception, his contagious enthusiasm and genial manner helping to make him welcome everywhere. Like Mr. Jorrocks, the Master was 'desperate anxious to make a start' as the time drew near for cubbing, and on August 22nd, 1900, he opened the ball at Acrise with the dog-hounds at 4 a.m. The entry in his diary runs thus :

Found a strong litter in Acrise Wood. Scent fair. Bustled round the wood for half an hour and away, having changed on an old fox. A cracker for twenty minutes before we could stop them. Came back to Acrise, but cubs had made themselves scarce. Found in adjoining shave and ran with an improved scent in cover back to Acrise and rattled him sharply for thirty minutes and killed. Satisfactory morning. Young hounds entered well. Home at ten o'clock.

The cubbing season proved satisfactory throughout, Waldershare, Beachborough and other places providing plenty of the raw material. The following days are worth recording as entered in the Master's journal:

August 25th.—Met at Garden Wood. Found a brace of old foxes and whipped off. Then found a nice litter in Lad's Wood. Hounds ran with mischief and meant business. They ran the coverts' utmost limits and back to Garden Wood, and rolled a strong cub over in fifty minutes. Found a second cub and ran him twenty-five minutes to ground. Bolted him and killed him. Nosegay did wonders. Young hounds did themselves justice.

October 1st.—Met at Cottington Alders, six o'clock. Rode eighteen miles to the meet. Left my house at 2.30; walked two miles to the kennels; left kennels at three o'clock; arrived at Cottington five minutes early. Found a fox up a tree in the Alders. Ran with a holding scent to Worth and on to Eastry, and killed an old fox at Northbourne, thirty-five minutes of the best! Found a litter in Eastry Brooks, and ran one to Betteshanger and whipped off. Found in Willow Wood and ran to ground. Very hot sun. Left off at one o'clock. Long ride home, arriving at 3.30. Hounds were out 12½ hours.

October 24th.—Met at Oxney. Ran one cub fifty minutes, and killed him on the beach, St. Margaret's Cliff. Found again in some mustard and ran well over the Downs, a cracker, to ground in forty minutes. Ended by killing a badger in Oxney Wood.

The cubbing season, which finished on October 30th, had already done much to make the Master's reputation—as well as to make hounds, and from November 1st onward the fields increased in size. Farmers who had ceased hunting turned out again, and the soldiers appeared in full force. The subscriptions of the latter, instead of being £45, amounted to more like £500 a year.

Important, and more essential than ever in these days, as is finance, hunting a country is not so much the finding of the wherewithal, and being simply the Magnus Apollo of the field, as hunting a pack of hounds to the satisfaction of members and farmers. Many have attempted to do both, but comparatively few have succeeded. The East Kent M.F.H. was no feather-bed and motor-car Master, and during his first cubbing season he had often twelve miles and more to travel to five o'clock fixtures, which necessitated him rising at two o'clock and walking to the kennels (two miles) in top boots, to make a start with hounds at three o'clock. Yet after a long morning's cubbing it was no uncommon thing to find him playing in a village cricket match in the afternoon. The alternative to walking to the kennels was cycling, but the first time he rode a bicycle in hunting kit the thong of his whip got him entangled in the gear and gave him a toss which considerably cooled his ardour for that mode of locomotion. After his first cubbing season all this was changed by his being invited to stay at different houses for outlying fixtures.

Master of the E.K. Hounds

On November 3rd, 1900, the opening fixture was held at Waldershare Park, the seat of the Earl of Guilford, where the new Master made his bow to a very large gathering of Hunt members and farmers. Lord Guilford entertained all comers to breakfast. The house-party included the Countess of Guilford, Lady Muriel North, Captain Howard and the Hon. Mrs. Howard, the Rt. Hon. Lawrence Hardy, M.P., and Mrs. Hardy, Miss Pawson, Mrs. Stapleton, Mr. and Mrs. Selby Lowndes, Mr. Weighall, Admiral Rice and Colonel Laurie.

The Master's diary reads:

At the Wilderness a fox was found at once, which gave a good gallop of thirty minutes to Lenacre and on to Old Park by Whitfield to Captain's Wood, and on to Eastney through the large covert, hounds rolling him over at Brinsdale Rough. Another fox found at Eastney Wood gave a sporting hunt across the Park and away to Tye Wood and back to Maiden Sole, on to Crab Hill, and left-handed to Ashley, hounds running into their fox in the open at Studall. A third fox found in Captain's Wood ran hounds out of sight. An enjoyable day, finishing with a stirrup cup at Waldershare on the way home.

Luckily the Master had brought ten couple of his own dog-hounds with him into East Kent, for the dog-hounds he found, on his arrival to take over the country, were far from good. Neither pack would break up a fox, and the old dog-hounds were as slack as could be. But as Mr. Jorrocks remarked, 'rope was cheap,' and the new Master was not slow in getting rid of the many sleeping partners of the chase.

The Hunt had to find £300 to reimburse Mr. White for the money his father had advanced for one pack. The Master was all for the committee allowing Mr. White to take the dog-hounds instead of paying him the £300, but they felt it a moral duty to refund him the money, which was accordingly done.

The Master found that drafts had been bought to maintain the strength of the pack and that very few puppies had been bred and walked in the country. This he determined to alter, and at the present time walks for at least thirty-five couple can be reckoned on. There was some difficulty at the outset in getting foster-mothers for the whelps, so an advertisement was inserted in the Ashford paper. Among the answers he received was the following :

DEAR SIR,—I beg to offer my services as foster-mother. I am thirty-five, very strong, and very fond of children,

Yours, etc.

Runs, with their redundancy of place names, are not very inspiring reading to those who do not know the country dealt with, but such are at liberty to 'lift' and gallop forward without reading the following extracts from the Master's diary regarding some of the red-letter days early in his Mastership. The following run was described thus in *The Field* :

Taking into consideration the many good runs we have had this season, it is rather hard to pick any particular one

and say it is the best. For a good hunting run with excellent hound-work it would be very hard to beat Boxing Day, when we found at Aldington and killed after an hour and thirty-five minutes. As far as pace goes, however, with a straight-necked fox, we have had no better gallop than Monday, December 31st, from Halfwayhouse. A fox was on foot as soon as we put in Woolage Wood, and ran to Swingfield, across to Picenden, on to Wootton by Denton, through Bigginswood on to Acrise, and ran away to Pillars by Coblin Rough, and killed him on the edge of Reindeer Wood, after an hour and ten minutes fast gallop. These hounds have killed no less than twenty brace of foxes up to January 1st.

January 2nd, 1901.—Hounds met at Shorncliffe and found a fox in Bargrove Wood. Leaving the covert and crossing the railway to Oakbank, he was holloa'd away on the far side, and ran to Haines Wood and on to Sandling through the Park to Folk's Wood and on to Lympne. Here our fox was headed, and ran below the cliff to West Hythe, and on through Redfield, and Chesterfield Wood, away over the line to Perry Wood, on to the Vents over Tolsford Hill to Brockman's Bushes, and on by the main Folkestone road to Ashley Wood, through by Coomb Wood over Hungerdown to Paddlesworth, right-handed to Argrove, and retracing his steps he ran to Cheriton Wood. Hounds were pressing him hard by now, and he had to face the open, and made a gallant attempt to face Hambrook's Down, but hounds rolled him over, having been hunting from 12.15 to three o'clock.

January 18th.—Hounds met at Black Mill and found a fox in Stafflands, and ran first to West Court and on to Woolage, right through this large covert and on to Wootton, left-handed to Lydden Hill Wood, on to Wickham Bushes and over the valley to Lyall Oak, across to Lord's Wood, on through the length of the wood, Ewell Mennis to Sunny Banks, rolling their fox over in an hour and fifteen minutes on the outskirts of Kearsney Village.

January 27th.—Met at Newingreen and had one of the finest runs it has ever been my lot to witness. We found in Lympne Park, and ran to Hillhurst, and on to Conduit Street to Herringe, and away to Aldington, and on to

Bonnington, to Bilsington and Ruckinge, away to Ham and on to Tenterden, to the borders of East Sussex, where hounds were stopped with difficulty after dark. Hounds must have travelled quite thirty miles and did not arrive home at the kennels till one o'clock the following morning. One member out landed home at 2 a.m. Mr. Buckland, M.H., Mr. Hogben, and only a few others saw the end of this great hunt. The Rev. Mr. Timins got half-way through when, having to bury someone, he had to retire.

February 11th.—Hounds met at Elvington Court, and found in Tye Wood ; ran him fast to Stafflands, on to Renbury and Oxney, away to Ailsham Firs to Womenswold, right-handed to Ileden, away at the Woodlands end of the large covert ; hounds got a view and raced him across to Noland Shave, killing him on the outskirts of Adisham. Found again in Pinners, and ran to Knowlton and on by Saint Albans to Goodnestone; ran to ground in a rabbit-hole ; bolted him and ran across Goodnestone Park and killed in the kitchen garden.

February 13th.—Met at Smeeth. Very large field out. Found in the Plantation and ran to Park Wood and on to Mersham Hatch, and on to Coomb, and lost him after forty minutes. Found again in Herringe and ran over as nice a country as any man could wish, touching Sellinge and on over part of the Smeeth point-to-point course, left-handed to Backhouse and on to Aldington Knole, killing at Falconhurst.

February 15th.—Met at Wringham, found in Wenderton Haith and ran to ground. Started digging operations, and left Tom hard at it. Found in Pine Wood, and ran to Trinley, where a lot of good woodland hunting without hounds going far afield ended with a kill. Our first fox was dug out and brought on by Tom, and was turned down and hunted, running for thirty minutes before hounds killed him.

Thursday, April 1st.—Last day of the season. Hounds met at Petham. After they had unfortunately killed a vixen, found again in Warren Wood and had a sporting hunt of fifty minutes, running to ground in the Denge, a covert of about 3,750 acres. When we drew Warren Wood I heard

my brother from the 'Whaddon' exclaim: "What's the name of this forest? My huntsman would begin to cry directly we got into such a place, let alone try to hunt a fox." I wondered what he said when he got into the Denge?

Thus ended season 1900–1901. Hounds hunted on 90 days, were stopped on 11 days, 3 blanks, found 24 litters of cubs and 90 foxes. Killed 28 brace, and ran 10 brace to ground. The number of foxes killed during the Master's first year was a record, since beaten by him during his second season, when 39½ brace were killed.

The East Kent General Hunt Meeting was held as usual after the close of the season, at the Fountain Hotel, Canterbury. Admiral Rice, presiding, said he was glad to see such a representative attendance. The East Kent Hunt, he remarked, had increased in popularity with all classes, due very much to their Master, and he congratulated the country on having such a sportsman at its head. Dr. Bishop, the honorary secretary, said he was glad to be able to tell them that for the first time for long they would not have to call upon the guarantors; that there was a balance in hand, and that was the most satisfactory statement they had had for some time. Other business transacted at this meeting was the purchase of half the pack.

Since the first general meeting of the present Mastership the subscriptions have increased every year, and the Master has received as much as £450 over and above his guarantee.

At the end of April 1901 the Master entertained the keepers in his country to a dinner, at which they were all paid for finds, litters of cubs and stopping. He organised a pigeon-shooting competition before they dined and wined. The money paid to the keepers was £2 for a litter and 10s. for each fox during the regular season. The earths stopped varied from £1 upwards, the whole amounting to something like £150. The dinner took place at the 'Rose and Crown,' Elham, and at its conclusion Mr. Vincent (the head keeper at Beachborough), on behalf of the keepers of the East Kent Hunt, presented the Master with a silver hunting-horn. In doing so he said the keepers would do all in their power to preserve foxes for him during his Mastership. This keepers' dinner has become an annual institution and has borne abundant fruit. As a rule, before the day is ended there is not a keeper present who is not a friend to foxes whatever he may have been before. Foxes have always been sufficient in number, though about this time, in common with every Hunt in England, the mange scourge played havoc in the country for a couple of seasons.

Speaking of foxes recalls a story which is worth telling, despite the digression. Truth is claimed for it, too! The late Earl of Thanet dug out a fox at Hothfield, and took it up to Appleby, in Westmorland, his other property. The following year the East Kent ran a fox to ground near Ashford,

and on digging him out found that he was the same fox that they had sent up to Westmorland the year before. They ear-marked him and returned him again to Westmorland. Two seasons later he was found and killed in the Hothfield district.

An East Kent Hunt Ball was another innovation introduced by the Master and Mrs. Selby Lowndes. It proved such a success that it is now held annually at the Hotel Metropole, Folkestone, during the season, followed by a fixture at the hotel at which a collection is always made for the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Society. The first Hunt Ball was held at Easter, 1901, and was splendidly attended, between 350 and 400 being present.

The cubbing season of 1901, which commenced on August 22nd at Tye Wood and ended on October 30th at Lady Wood, deserves comment, as owing to sufficient moisture in the ground, scent was excellent throughout, and sport consequently of the best. Cubs were very plentiful, hounds killing no less than fourteen brace. Three days are specially mentioned in the Master's diary. Two of these were at Elham Park and Woolage Wood respectively (when he handled a brace of cubs after hard but good scenting mornings), and the third in the Creet, when he killed a strong cub after two hours' hard work. Those who know these three strongholds also know how hard it is to handle a cub, let alone an old fox. Other days especially mentioned were from fixtures at Waldershare,

Acrise, St. Albans, Stafflands, Beachborough, Postling Vents, Aldington and Alkham ; but the morning at Each End Hill deserves especial mention. The following account of the day was written by Mr. D'Aeth and appeared in *The Field* :

The best day of the best cub-hunting season on record in East Kent was Wednesday, October 23rd. The fixture was Each End Hill, and hounds were no sooner in the Lintswood, near the Elham Valley Line, than a litter was on the move. Hounds ran with a great cry, scent being of the best. A strong cub soon faced the open, and heading first for Ashley Wood, turned left-handed for the hills. On reaching the top, hounds hunted him nearly to Acrise, then right-handed to Paddlesworth Court Wood through Pillars and Cobham Rough to Reindeer Wood, where he got to ground after a capital hunt of a little over an hour over some nice country. Our second fox was found in Cheriton Wood—an old dog fox. Taking the usual line foxes adopt from this covert, he ran up the hill, and over to Gibraltar, then right-handed to Killingwood, across the Folkestone and Canterbury road, and leaving Hawkinge Church on the right, took us by Upper Standen and Everden to Alkham ; where he crossed the Alkham Valley road, and ran through Chilton and St. Radigund's Abbey, swung round to the left and went on to River Wood, hounds rolling him over in a sheep-pen after a nine-mile point.

The regular season opened on November 4th at Waldershare Park. Lord and Lady Guilford, who had only recently been married, celebrated the occasion by entertaining a very large field to breakfast. Sport was rather interfered with by the crowds of foot people, but a fox from Malmarns eventually got well away and gave a nice hunt to Brinsdale and on to Tye Wood, back by Coldred to

the Wilderness across the park, hounds killing him in Church Wood.

The Master found the wish father to the thought that he had plenty of country to allow a fourth day. Parts of it, such as 'the Denge' (an enormous covert of 3,750 acres, but well-'rided,' as a rule carrying a fair scent, and always holding foxes), and also the Alkham and Hougham Valleys, had only been irregularly hunted. So in due course Saturdays were fixed for a fourth day in the shape of a 'bye.' Although essentially woodland hunting, the Saturday meets are always well attended. Both the Denge and Alkham Valley have provided many memorable hunts, and the fourth day proved the means of driving the foxes back into the better parts of the country. The Master was assisted by amateur whippers-in on these 'byes,' the first two to act in that capacity being Captain Cape, 18th Hussars, and Mr. 'Tommy' Young, of the Agricultural College, Wye. Both these gentlemen thoroughly understood their job, and were as keen on it as the Master himself. They left kennels with hounds and returned with them, and seldom left one out. They both knew the country in a very short time, and could view a fox with the best of professionals. Later on Lord Guilford acted as first whip, and was always in the right place, and quite an adept at getting hounds on. Captain Sutton, of the 11th Hussars, was another who acted as amateur whipper-in. He was a fine horseman,

keen as mustard, and loved sport. In fact, the four above mentioned would be hard indeed to beat for turning hounds to a huntsman, and the Master always speaks of their work on these bye days with the highest praise, and acknowledged what a great help they were to him in killing foxes. Later, Major Geddes, R.F.A., acted in this capacity, looked forward to the bye days, and did good work, as did Mr. Churchill, Secretary of the Hunt and Field Master. Mr. Antony Bovill, of the 9th Lancers, and Mr. Lee,[1] 60th Rifles, also acted as whippers-in in later years. Mr. Lee served his novitiate with the East Kent M.F.H., and eventually took over the Taunton Vale fox-hounds.

A good story is told of the Master and one of his bye days. Hounds met at Lydden, and found at once in Lord's Wood, the result being a rattling gallop of an hour. Finally they ran their fox into Kearsney Court garden, where he was so beat he crawled through a high-spiked railing into a lane, and lay down on the bank-side. Hounds were unable to get through or over the fence. One hound *did* try, and was impaled on the top of one of the spikes. The Master, seeing the fox was dead-beat, holloa'd to the gardener, who had joined the hunt, not to disturb the fox until he could get round with his hounds. The gardener, not catching what the Master said, in his excitement put up the fox, which crawled

[1] Capt. C. F. Lee held the Mastership for only one season (1914-15), as he rejoined his regiment on the outbreak of war and served later with the Royal Flying Corps. He went out to America to instruct the American troops, became a General, and was killed after the war flying in a trial trip.

across the field and got to ground in a badger earth. When the Master arrived with his hounds, desperately keen to kill his fox, and heard what had happened he went purple with rage, frightening the gardener almost out of his wits. An old labourer stood looking on, his mouth growing wider and wider every minute. When the Master had exhausted his expletives and become quite out of breath, the auditor exclaimed: "Well, gentlemen, I think he has said *it all*"; and there is a tradition that on the spot where the Master stood the grass has never grown since!

Strange to relate, the same fox was found a month later on a Saturday, and ran the precise line, through the Kearsney Court garden, where the Master again encountered his friend the gardener, and holloa'd out to him: "Have you seen the fox?" "No," said the gardener, "*and what's more, I'll take d——d good care I don't!*" However, on this occasion the Master held his hounds beyond the garden, avoiding the spiked fence; hit off the line by the old badger earth (which had been stopped), and ran the fox over the main railway-line, where an express train nearly dashed into the pack. However, fortune favoured them; they got clear, and ran down into Kearsney village, checking by the river running through it. Suddenly hounds dashed into the water and swam down the river under the bridge, dislodging their fox, which had taken refuge on a ledge. Fox and hounds came swimming out down

the river followed by a huge crowd of horsemen and spectators on the bank. Hounds eventually swam into their quarry in front of the grounds of a nunnery. The Master and Lord Guilford were soon in the river, and had the fox out and broke him up. The Master, whose top-boots were full of water, then lay on his back and emptied the contents. In the meantime, one Mr. Strong by name, a Roman Catholic, was heard to express the pious hope: "Oh, gentlemen, I *do* hope the Master won't use bad language or ask the nuns for beer!"

Another memorable Saturday from the Denge was when hounds ran a dog fox for some considerable time, and eventually to ground in the Chartham Asylum Grounds in a long drain, reaching something like fifty yards. A terrier was put in, with no result; in fact, the poor little fellow was never seen again, owing to some drop-pit or well in connection with the drain. The next plan tried was to 'flush' the fox out, and the fire hose from the Asylum was commandeered, but proved of no avail. The Master then determined to try the Asylum chimney-sweeping apparatus. After much excitement the fox was poked out, and hounds killed him and broke him up in the middle of the lawn. The Master was delighted at getting his fox out, and began discussing the run with the pedestrian who had held his horse during bolting operations. He described the line taken, and gave

a graphic account of the run, but finding the man took little or no interest indignantly relieved him of his horse. Later he discovered that he had been talking to one of the Asylum inmates. The Master presented the superintendent of the Asylum with the brush, and received the greatest hospitality.

The Master occasionally had a day with the Tickham Hounds on a Thursday, sometimes being mounted by Mr. Gillett, of Chilham, but more often staying with the late Mr. W. E. Rigden, then Master. The East Kent M.F.H. always considered Mr. Rigden one of the most charming men he knew, and many were the pleasant evenings they spent together. Mr. Rigden invariably had cheery parties to stay with him. He was most popular all over his country, and practically ran the pack at his own expense from 1874 to 1904. The hounds were his own property, and he spared no expense in bringing them up to a high standard. The East Kent M.F.H. always judged at Mr. Rigden's puppy show, and has continued to judge at the Tickham up to the present time. The Tickham territory is much the same as the East Kent, except that the East Kent have more open country and a real good piece of vale. Mr. Rigden was a good huntsman and had an excellent working pack of hounds. He hunted the country for no less than thirty years. It was during his thirty-first season, while out cubbing (September 1904), that he ran a thorn through his boot into his foot. Unfortunately, blood-poisoning

supervened and to everyone's great sorrow he died within a few days.[1] The following is a letter from Mrs. Rigden to Mrs. Lowndes, showing the love he had for hunting, and that his thoughts were with his hounds at the end :

Faversham,
September 28th, 1904.

DEAR MRS. SELBY LOWNDES,—Thank you so much for your letter. I knew how sorry you would both be. He was only ill a few days, and until Sunday he thought it was gout. Tell your husband that all Sunday night he thought he was hunting, and kept on cheering on his hounds and trying to blow his horn. . . .

Sincerely yours,
JESSIE RIGDEN.

Mr. Rigden left his beautiful pack of hounds, horses and kennels to his wife, who in conjunction with Mr. George Evans[2] carried on the country for two seasons, and then dissolved partnership. Mrs. Rigden sold the pack for £1,500 to her brother-in-law, Mr. John Rigden, who presented them to the country, she herself lending the kennels and stables to the committee rent free. Mr. George Evans showed good sport during his two years' joint-Mastership. He and the East Kent M.F.H. were great friends, and there was always considerable rivalry between the members of the respective Hunts as to which of the two Masters could kill the

[1] Mr. William Edward Rigden died September 26, 1904, aged 61. He took the Tickham Hounds in 1874, acted as his own huntsman, and was considered one of the foremost huntsmen of his day in a woodland country. His father had been Master of the Tickham 1832–44, and joint-Master with Mr. W. Hall 1852–71. In the latter season he met his death through a fall whilst cub-hunting.—Editor.

[2] An old friend of the late Master's, and himself Master of the Cambridgeshire for ten years.—Editor.

most foxes in a season. They often stayed together, and also hunted occasionally with each other.

On one occasion the East Kent had a capital gallop from Beachborough, running their fox for an hour and twenty minutes over a lot of country, and eventually into Beachborough Park gardens. Jumping off his horse, and following on foot, the Master killed his fox handsomely on the lawn; and getting hold of him by the brush, threw the fox over his shoulders, and started carrying him out into the Park. Suddenly one of the hounds flew at the fox, and missing him, bit Harry Lowndes instead, much to everyone's amusement. How speedily sporting news travels is illustrated by the fact that Mr. George Evans wired to his brother M.F.H. the same evening from Faversham asking him if he could sit down comfortably! It afterwards transpired that a lady who had witnessed the incident had telephoned the news to Mr. Evans from Canterbury.

The following story is told of Mr. Evans. One summer, during his Tickham Mastership, he blackguarded his keeper for not having caught enough vermin, and showed him how to set a trap safely. The following morning he saw his keeper and asked him how the trapping was going on. "Oh," said the keeper, "I caught three hedgehogs in *my* trap, and a cub in the trap *you* set, sir." "Did you?" said Evans. "And what, pray, did you do with

it?" "'It it on the 'ead, sir," was the reply. Exit the Tickham M.F.H.

To continue in an anecdotal vein, let me recount a story of one day in East Kent, when a man overrode hounds badly. The Master was very irate, and asked him who the devil he was. "A subscriber to the West Kent who occasionally hunts with the East Kent," was the reply. "Then, d—— you, sir, in future *subscribe* to the *East* Kent, and hunt regularly with the *West* Kent," was the ready answer.

It is the Master's boast he has never been two minutes late at the covert-side during the whole of his long reign as a Master of Hounds. A friend once said of him, "It would have been almost as easy to have dammed the falls of Niagara as to quench that inbred love of hunting or his anxiety to 'get going.'" If not born with a silver spoon in his mouth, one might imagine that a hunting-horn was substituted. An amusing incident once happened when he was out with the Whaddon Hounds—till recently the Lowndes family pack. They met at a rich American's house, and hounds were paraded on the lawn in front. Harry Lowndes was talking to the huntsman, when up came Mr. 'Dollars' and tipped the hunt servants 10s. each, including Harry, who promptly pocketed the half-sovereign. On relating the incident to his brother-in-law, the Rev. 'Jack' Milne,[1] so long M.F.H. of the

[1] The Rev. E. A. Milne succeeded Mr. J. Hargreaves as Master of the Cattistock in 1900. He has acted as his own huntsman, but this season, 1926–27, is joined in the responsibilities of control by Major Lord Digby, D.S.O., M.C., who will hunt the pack five days a fortnight.—Editor.

Cattistock, his reverence capped the story by telling an incident which happened when he was a M.H. He had a rich young man as paying guest who whipped-in to him. One day they killed a hare, which hounds broke up before she could be saved. As it was customary for the owner of the land on which a hare was found to be presented with it if killed, Parson Milne purchased a hare on his return home, and sent it by his rich young friend to the farmer. When the young man handed over his burden, he received a tip of a threepenny bit!

On one occasion a young man visiting the East Kent kennels at Elham was anxious to display his knowledge to an admiring young lady he had with him. On asking to see the young entry, the Master remarked that 'many of them were down with distemper, but he would show him those which had got over it.' After due inspection they retired to the stables, and the young man innocently inquired of the stud groom 'if the horses were all over distemper'!

The East Kent M.F.H. was occasionally asked to take his hounds and have a day in the Tickham country. On one of these, Lenham station was the rendezvous. Horses and hounds were taken by special train, no less than twenty East Kent farmers boxing their horses. They were in luck's way, finding a good fox and having a fine gallop of an hour and forty minutes, running a dead-beat fox to ground. The Tickham followers were

out in great force and were loud in praise of the way hounds hunted, and also very surprised to see such a keen lot of East Kent farmers turn up at the meet.

Mr. G. B. Winch and Colonel Carter succeeded Mr. George Evans as joint-Masters of the Tickham in 1908 for one season, and then Mr. W. C. Dawes had a season, being joined by Lord Harris. They had George Alcock as huntsman. He came from the Blackmore Vale, and found it was a very different thing killing a fox in the Tickham to killing one in the Blackmore Vale, where he was accustomed to account for a hundred brace a season. This first season in Kent he was only able to handle ten brace, eleven brace the second season, and fourteen the third. Foxes were none too numerous, and took a deal of catching, whereas in the Blackmore Vale they were overrun with them. 'Hedgerow foxes which took comparatively little killing and ran about like rabbits,' is the East Kent Master's description. Poor George Alcock felt the changed conditions keenly, but every fox he killed in the Tickham was a credit to himself and hounds.

Speaking of adjoining countries brings one to the West Kent Hounds, which hunt the district round Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Wrotham, and are divided by a large tract of unhunted country from the East Kent, including the Ashford and Headcorn district, which is hunted by the Mid-Kent Stag-hounds. The West Kent can boast of having had some Masters famed in the history of sport. Such men as John

Warde of Squerries, Sir John Dyke and Sir Thomas Dyke all bore names to conjure with. Then, too, that renowned old sportsman, the Hon. Ralph Nevill, hunted the hounds for no less than thirty years.

A story is told of a stranger hunting with the West Kent one day a few years ago. He had the misfortune to override hounds, and being upbraided by the Master, merely replied: "Sir, I have been sworn at by Evans of the Tickham, and admonished by Selby Lowndes of the East Kent, so that anything you may have to say to me will be like unto the twittering of a bird."

To return to events in their chronological order: the East Kent Hounds seem to have had a fine run on Wednesday, December 12th. The following is the Master's record of it in his diary:

Hounds met at Smeeth station. After drawing Backhouse blank, a move was made for the Aldington Woods, where we were not long before we heard a view-holloa on the Knoll, and as we went to it information was conveyed by signal and otherwise that a fox had gone away. I learned he had a good five minutes' start. Hounds were desperate eager to get on but held together till we rounded the hill, where they felt for, and soon picked up, the scent. They went off with a good cry, and at a fair pace. Some of us knowing ones on the ride were inclined to hustle hounds before they had properly settled down and established a scent. The line was over a nicely fenced country that required a little doing, and some of the fences took toll of one or two impetuous spirits, which steadied the field, a bit. After fifteen glorious minutes we were all on good terms with the pack, and the best with each other and our horses, and I was able to see which hounds were cutting out the work. Two officers from Shorncliffe and two farmers were prominent

in front, and close on our wake thundered and crashed a score or more of the field. The pace was kept for another twenty minutes over large grass enclosures. There was no perceptible change in scent, and hounds were soon pointing towards the Stouting Hills, rising in front of us as they got on the base of them. We could hear hounds chiming merrily as we felt we might have to take more out of our horses than they had to give. I watched the pack swing up the slope. Will the fox sink the wind, or will he keep on up wind? He chose the latter. We lost sight of the pack for a few minutes, and I was beginning to feel anxious when some sheep in the distance wheeled round and gave us an inkling of the direction hounds had gone. We were now in the hill country, with large coverts in the distance; fences were few, but once on the top of the hill, good going. Hounds checked above Stouting village but cast themselves forward, hitting him off just as we got up to them, and I cheered them on. Hounds running as hard as ever, entered Stouton Rough, and on to West Wood, to Sibiton Wood. Here we had some very pretty hunting; hounds were desperately keen and unmistakably near their fox, but scent was not so good, and one after another would carry it for a short while then fall back and allow a slower hunter to take it on, and follow the short turns the fox was making. It was an anxious time as they almost walked after their fox on to the public road, where hounds checked, but old Tomboy hit him off up the Wood, and proclaimed his find with a deep-toned roar. Never was a note more welcome and never did a huntsman tingle more. The hounds dashed to their old comrade, took the line steadily on to the Plantation and Elham Park, through the large covert, and ran out into some thick broom and brambles half-way between Elham Park and the covert, where the fox lay down. Old Sailor, Sepoy and Rattler ran mute with their hackles up as they crashed through the broom, the fox a few yards ahead of them. Hounds, getting a view, opened their throats, and threw their tongues with all their might, as they hurled themselves at him, and pulled him down in the open as he wheeled round to face them! "Whoo-oo-oo-oop! old lads, tear him, and eat him up!" from half a dozen throats.

"Well done, old lads; ten, twelve, fifteen, seventeen couple, only one hound short!" A seven-mile point, over vale, hill and wood. Here comes the Secretary, must try him for a drink, as he generally carries a big flask. My throat was like a lime-kiln. Once more, "Whoo-oo-oop!"

Several more red-letter days are duly entered in the diary about this time. On January 6th, 1902, a large field met at Elvington Court and two good runs were enjoyed, one of an hour and fifteen minutes, and the other of fifty minutes, each ending with a kill. On Wednesday, January 8th, a capital day's hunting fell to the pack, from Horton Park, the seat of Mr. Swindells, who always had a good fox ready and kept open house to all. On this occasion the fox was pulled down handsomely close to Wootton, after a run of an hour and fifty minutes.

On Wednesday, January 15th, an enormous field turned up at the Redoubt House, Shorncliffe Camp, the residence of General Parr. A fox found in Ashley Wood faced the open at once, hounds getting well away with him. After a fast run he was killed in the drive of Acrise Place. A second fox, found in Paddlesworth Court Wood, gave another good run. This was a hard day's sport; falls were very numerous, one officer breaking his shoulder in two places. On Saturday, February 1st, a very fine woodland hunt followed upon a fixture at Elham. In the words of the diary:

Hounds soon found in the Park and ran through all the immense disconnective woodlands, hustling their fox to

some order, and making him break from one large tract of woodland after another, finally marking him to ground. The terriers were quickly on the scene, and Nettle was soon at work bolting our fox and two badgers, all of which hounds accounted for. It was found that the terrier had been severely mauled during bolting operations. Hounds then moved on to Woolage Wood, a sure find, soon having a fox on foot ; they ran him with a rare scent for thirty minutes and killed on the Shepherdswell Railway.

Sport during the rest of February and up to the middle of March continued above the average, and a successful season ended on the 10th of April, hounds having hunted 95 days, stopped on 9, found 25 litters and 105 foxes, killed 37½ brace and run 13½ brace to ground.

The Hunt Ball took place at the Metropole Hotel, Folkestone, on April 9th, 400 people attending, and the point-to-point races were held at Postling on April 17th.

CHAPTER IX

SEASONS 1902–1905

In the year 1902 hounds commenced cubbing on August 30th at Elham Park, killing a brace after a hard morning. Cubs were plentiful in most parts of the country. The regular season opened on November 3rd at Knowlton Court, the seat of Mr. Peto, who entertained a large crowd prior to a successful day. Another very good day was November 10th, when the meet was at Sandling Park. Hounds found in the celebrated fox covert rented by Mr. Hardy, Lympne Park. The Master had hardly put hounds into covert when a ringing view-holloa came from Jack Grant (the first whip), and a real straight-necked fox got well away, pointing straight for Aldington. He raced over a large, open, grassed tract intersected with many posts and rails and new-laid fences, which gave the most gluttonous riders ample opportunity to fly along to their hearts' content. Thirty minutes with innumerable obstacles began to tell on many a good rider and horse. Running through Hillhurst, by Conduit Street, and on to Herring Brook, left-handed to Smeeth, and on by Backhouse to Aldington Knoll, the fox was viewed several

times but eventually beat them by going to ground.

Harking back for a moment, one gathers from entries in his diary that the Master hunted and shot alternate days from the 1st of September to the 25th. On one occasion he seems to have had a somewhat exasperating experience. He was asked by a shooting tenant to have a day's sport, his prospective host promising to meet him at the station, which was four miles distant from the shoot. When the day came, and the M.F.H. arrived at the station at eight o'clock on a cold morning, with a gun, a case and a couple of hundred cartridges, he found no cart to meet him and none available for hire. Foot-slogging being the only alternative, off he set, arriving at his host's in time for breakfast. The host apologised for not meeting him by casually saying he was unable to make arrangements. However, the Master, whose appetite was always keen, knowing 'short commons' would be the order of the day in the house, determined to fortify himself. He therefore made such an onslaught on the eggs and bacon that more had to be sent for, and his host was much taken aback, never having had a reputation for the generosity of his table! The other guns consisted of the host, two sons from school, their tutor and the Hon. Wilfred James, a friend of the Master's, who had also received an invitation six weeks beforehand, and, like the Master, had taken the precaution to bring a large supply of

ammunition in the expectation of a big day. The programme consisted of beating an outside wood for stray birds and rabbits! Both the Master and Mr. James had narrow escapes of being shot by the tutor and his pupils, and both eventually retired to the shelter of a ditch till lunch-time. The bag at the end of the day did not require a farm-cart to convey it home. However, Mr. James and the Master were philosophical, and, thanking God for small mercies, congratulated themselves on their safe return to the house after having narrated to each other their hair-breadth escapes during the day. After tea, the host casually mentioned his inability to send the Master to the station. Fortunately this time—or, rather, unfortunately, as it turned out—Mr. Wilfred James volunteered to drive him to his train, and away they started. Half-way to the station the horse ran away and threw them both out. The Master lost his brace of pheasants and his cartridge-bag. Mr. James' birds were also lost, and they did not see the horse and cart again that night, both having to trudge to the station, the Master having to catch a later train, and Mr. James to hire a cart. So ended an eventful and memorable if not very sporting day!

At this period the Master's son, aged six, hunted regularly, and, like his father, was, and is, desperately keen and devoted to hunting. One day when hounds were running hard his father said to him :

"Stick close to me, boy, or you'll never see your mother again."

"Yes, Dad," was the reply, "but what's more to the point, if we don't look sharp *we shan't see the hounds again* either."

The boy also amused his father one day at Swingfield Park out cubbing. Hounds were running hard. The Master was on a cob, cantering round the covert, and coming to some hurdles was quietly opening them, when his son and General Fanshawe's son galloped up and popped over the hurdles, the boy saying as they went over:

"I say, Evelyn, the old man's getting a bit slow, ain't he?"

One day, shortly after, the Master was very irate, having lost his fox, when a labourer held up his hat and beckoned. The Master, delighted, galloped up to him, exclaiming: "Which way did he go, my man?"

"Well, sir," said the man, "I seed a fox at five this mornin' when foddering cattle. He was going——"

The M.F.H. 'suitably replied.'

The Master claimed at this time that he 'lived on partridges in September, and pheasants in October and November.' He was a good shot and was asked everywhere, and entirely through good fellowship, as he could not return the compliment by inviting his friends to shoot. If he had been a millionaire he could not have led a more strenuous

sporting life. He never troubled London much, and has only belonged to one London club in his life —the 'Nimrod,' which closed its doors in a year.

Once when the Master was in London he wired to his brother-in-law, who was on the Stock Exchange, saying he had money to invest, asking him to meet him at the Trocadero at 1.30. The brother-in-law turned up in a hurry and stood a rare lunch, and then approached him as to the money he wished to invest. "Oh," said Harry, "of course, you mean the wire I sent. Well, I want you to lend me £150 at 2½ per cent., to pay for two horses I have just bought." Exit brother-in-law.

To return to the season of 1902–1903, sport continued up to the average during November and December, outstanding days being December 22nd and December 24th. On the former there were two excellent runs, the first ending with a kill in the open after thirty-five minutes of the best, and the second a run of forty minutes. On the 24th a fox was pulled down in the valley by Wootton after a great gallop of an hour and forty-three minutes over a lot of country.

Apparently it was the Master's custom to give the Folkestone foot contingent an opportunity for a day's hunting on Easter Monday, as the following account from his diary shows:

On Easter Monday, 1903, a fixture was arranged for the Folkestone and Dover foot people, the rendezvous being 'The Valiant Sailor.' The meet was advertised to hunt

on foot, and the Warren and Dover Cliffs, well known haunts of the fox, were the happy hunting-grounds. The field must have consisted of at least 2,000 people, the huge cliffs both at the top and bottom being a mass of foot folk. The Master and Messrs. D'Aeth and Young had systematically gone over the Cliffs the day before, and bolted foxes out of some well-known strongholds, and then organised a plan of earth-stopping, which very considerably added to the day's sport. It was not long before a fox was on foot—in fact a brace. The hunted fox traversed the Cliffs at the most steep and dangerous parts, the excitement of the crowd being intense. Two or three, more daring than the rest, became crag-bound and were rescued by three sailors at great risk; the fox and hounds, slipping often from one ledge of rock to another, could be witnessed by the whole field at times. In fact, the whole proceedings were not unlike hunting in the Lake District with a mountain pack. Several followers had narrow escapes owing to falling pieces of rock. One hound was hurled into space and killed at the foot of the Cliff, after having made a desperate effort to reach a crag to which the fox could be seen hanging. A rope was requisitioned, a man lowered and the fox dislodged, but only to get to ground in a cavity under a hanging rock, where digging operations were attempted. Volunteers for digging quickly came forward, but they found it hard work to stand at such an angle, let alone dig. However, they made a mighty effort, but unfortunately without success, the rocks being too numerous. Another fox found ran the Cliff-side and eventually came down, crossed the Dover line, and was marked to ground in the rocks on the seashore.

The season 1904–1905 proved one of the best for scent known in East Kent for years. Colonel Laurie, and several more of the oldest members of the Hunt, stated they had never seen hounds run so consistently day after day. It has always been said rain and deep going are essential for sport in Kent. The years 1904–1905 provided these

conditions *ad lib.*, for it rained day after day, and the Master's diary shows that he seldom came home from hunting dry throughout the best part of the season. Hounds were only stopped on four occasions—hunted 101 days, killed 30 brace of foxes, and ran 16 brace to ground.

The Master had a desperate fall one day during this season, and was asked by a fussy man, "Hurt, sir?" "*Hurt be damned! I'm gathering mushrooms!*" was the answer, as he rode over a gate. An uncomplimentary friend of his once remarked: "When Harry was made a M.F.H. a good bargeman was spoiled." Apropos of this, one winter he enters in his journal that he gave his whips an extra 10*s.* all round at Christmas for "*having sworn at them more than usual.*" The Master of the Mid-Kent Stag-hounds made the following remark at a farmers' lunch held in connection with his point-to-point races, when some 800 farmers were present: "To be a Master of Hounds you want the patience of Job, the eyes of Argus, the sanctity of a bishop, the tact of a Prime Minister—but also the language of Selby Lowndes." Harry Lowndes was no respecter of persons. One generous subscriber said: "My word, gentlemen, the Master used *such* language to me to-day, the Commination Service wasn't in it."

On another occasion, when hounds were running from Beachborough to Postling, a well-known valuer was standing on the road, and said to his son: "You don't know the Master, do you?" "No,"

was the reply. "Then," went on the father, "if you stand here quietly, if you don't see him, you'll *hear* him." After a while a voice was heard: "D—— you, sir," etc., etc. "There," said the valuer; "*that* is Mr. Selby Lowndes; *isn't he worth a pound a minute as a linguist?*"

During the season 1904–1905 a fox found at Backhouse in the Vale provided a very fast fifty-five minutes over a glorious country, all grass and clean fences. Hounds ran at a trimming pace all the way, and eventually the fox, dead beat, crawled along the trunk of a fallen tree, reaching half-way across a deep pond. Hounds followed him, and they all rolled into the water, killing their fox, which sunk. The Master was in the pond in a minute, up to his shoulders, and fished out his fox, while his first whip (Jack Grant) stood on the bank looking on. "Come in, Jack," called out the Master, and in Jack had to be, 'as good as his Master,' and help in the worry, nearly up to his neck in the water. A farmer standing by was highly delighted. He said the fox had paid his poultry many a visit, and so he opened his cellar to the Master, the Hunt servants, and the field. The former returned home, luckily wet inside as well as out, as the evening turned desperately cold before reaching the kennels.

On November 24th a memorable hunt took place in the Vale. A fox, found at Lympne, ran over the cream of the Vale, eventually reaching the marshes at Bonnington, running on to Newchurch. Here

the Master experienced much difficulty in keeping with hounds. He was obliged to leave his own horse, which was done to a turn, and looked about him for one of the field whose mount he might commandeer. He discovered, however, that no one had succeeded in coming on so far. Hounds were still running, so, catching sight of a boy riding a solid-tyred bicycle, the Master hailed him, the machine was requisitioned, and the unusual experience of a huntsman getting to hounds on a cycle is still talked of in East Kent. In the meantime hounds had run to Ivy Church, near which the fox was killed after a record run of two hours and an eleven-mile point.

A long account in *The Field* from 'The Dog Clambercrown' during this good season was much discussed. It referred to a run with an East Kent fox which stood up before hounds for 3½ hours, before getting to ground at Waldershare. Hounds covered an enormous amount of country. On January 25th a fox found at Trinley Park ran into the Barracks at Canterbury and was killed after an exciting run. The Tommies doing fatigue drill could not resist joining in the chase and, in spite of threats from their sergeant, dismissed themselves and 'filed away.'

In addition to the regular followers, there is, in most countries, a certain number who 'come and go.' The East Kent has had its share of these, and during the season under review there was hunting with them an extraordinary youth, with no hair,

bad teeth, and a touch of St. Vitus' dance. He was very loath to pay his subscription, and, though an absolute nonentity, was somewhat overbearing and insistent in his impertinent criticisms. This young man caused much amusement at a meeting of the Hunt by 'reporting' the Master in that 'on a certain day hounds were running with a very bad scent, and on coming to a ride in the wood, the Master found a Folkestone contingent of ladies had overridden the line. The Master called out loud enough for all to hear: "D——n it! If only my fox carried as much scent as some of the ladies out, I should stand a darned better chance of hunting him." This very serious indictment only produced a roar of laughter from the meeting, and the ladies in question were highly amused, taking it as a great joke, and not the insult the would-be gallant imagined.

On another occasion this season one of the young hounds killed a lamb. The following morning the Master received a post-card, in red ink, saying: 'I hear you have some mutton for sale, but that the fore quarters have already been consumed; should like a hind quarter.' The Master replied: 'Yours to hand; regret *only* hind quarters left; have to-day sent you on a ring of mutton, the choicest piece left."

Mention of mutton recalls another local story. Mr. Cecil Kingsford, a well-known Canterbury hunting lawyer, once had a visit from his butcher, who came to ask for advice. He told the lawyer that a dog had come to his shop, and had stolen a leg of

mutton, and asked if the owner was responsible. "Yes, certainly!" said Mr. Kingsford. "Then you owe me 5*s*.," said the butcher, "it was *your* dog that stole the mutton." "Ah, but hold hard," retorted the crafty lawyer; "you came to me professionally; my fee is 6*s*. 8*d*., so you owe me 1*s*. 8*d*."

Among other comers and goers of the East Kent at this period was a youth known as 'the Cough-drop.' The Master nicknamed him 'Pacey' from his resemblance to the famous character in 'Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour.' The Cough-drop was just of age, and began his hunting career by consulting every man in the field as to what each thought of a certain horse before he bought it—the first hunter he had ever owned. Full of incessant chatter, and all arms and legs, he yet had plenty of self-assurance, and within a month quite felt he knew as much, if not more, than the Master, Hunt servants and field put together! It was a pure case of 'so wise we grow, we think our fathers fools.' Before long he came in contact with the Master's wrath. The first occasion when he fell foul of him was owing to him holloaing a fox he had viewed a quarter of a mile away on the opposite side of the valley, bringing hounds and huntsmen to his holloa, only to inform them that he had cleverly viewed a fox in the opposite direction. On another occasion the Cough-drop noticed the Master had a rider's strain strap round his leg. It was not long before our young friend copied him and came out hunting with a strain strap

too, getting off at the meet, and limping about amongst the field with a long face. However, on the next hunting day much amusement was caused by one of the field noticing that he had put the strap on the wrong leg!

When riding at a point-to-point he was asked why he looked so glum. "Oh," he said, "an old family nurse dreamt last night I was going to have a bad fall." One Monday when buying a horse at Tattersalls he was chaffed, and told not to get done; but he merely replied: "My dear fellow, if Tattersalls saw me bidding for a wrong 'un he would not accept my bid."

Another bygone follower once wrote to the Master this same season and complained that 'remarks had been made in the hunting-field regarding his wife's costume.' The Master replied thus: "As far as I am concerned as Master, you and your wife can come out dressed as you please; in fact, if you wish to come out with only a pair of spurs, and your wife with a fig-leaf—still pleased to see you." While on the subject of 'comers and goers' in the hunting-field the following story may be included. On one of the few occasions when the East Kent M.F.H. was able to get a day with the family pack (the Whaddon Chase) he was standing near Mr. Uthwatt, the secretary, and heard him go to a distinguished-looking individual and ask him for his cap. "Yes, certainly," replied the stranger. He took off his hat, and then remarked: "What's the matter with it?"

The stranger was the German Ambassador, who, not being well versed in English sporting terms, had never heard of 'a cap' being taken in the hunting-field.

At this period the East Kent had an increased following of soldiers from Shorncliffe, Dover and Canterbury; and during this extra good season "Old Selby," as the Master was called by high and low, was toasted at mess after many a good hunt. Among the soldiers following at this time were officers of many crack regiments, including the Royals, 11th Hussars, 9th Lancers, Carabiniers, 60th Rifles, Buffs, 7th Dragoon Guards, Royal Field Artillery, Royal Horse Artillery, Irish Rifles, Seaforths, 3rd Hussars, King's Own Lancashire, Warwicks, Leicesters, Royal Engineers, etc. All these regiments supported the Hunt most generously, and entertained the followers when they met at the different messes, the Master and secretary always going the night before and spending a most jovial evening. The soldiers, like the farmers in East Kent, were a strong pillar to the welfare of fox-hunting, and at this time had some of the best hunters it was possible to find. At the many point-to-point race fixtures in East Kent, which as a rule included three or four regimental meetings, the events were all hotly contested, and the winners and riders had to be exceptionally good. Among the great many well-known officers hunting from this period onward were:[1] Generals

[1] The ranks are those held at that period.—Editor.

Parr, Haldane, Stuart Wortley, Bingham, Lomax, Wilson, Fanshawe, Byng, etc.; Colonels Fanshawe, Thompson, Dietz, Kennedy, Pitman, Godman (M.F.H.), Biscowe, Tylden, Eton, Hickson, Campbell, Whatman, Eden; Majors Geddes (amateur whip), Campion, Papillon, Rome, Moberly, Lempriere, etc.; Captains Sutton (amateur whip), Lakin (later M.F.H.), Jackson (Master of the Drag), Heseltine, Michel, Ainsworth, White, Pelham, Murry (Master of Drag), Cape (amateur whip), Robertson (later M.F.H.), Wellesley, Godfrey Heseltine (later M.F.H., now M.B.), Charles Lee (late M.F.H., an amateur whip), Bovill (ex-amateur whip), Elliot (whip to drag), Watson (Master of Drag), Porter (Master of Cavalry Barracks Beagles), Kidd, Sadler Wright, Cresswell, Rasch and Renny.

The annual general meeting was held, in 1905, at the close of the season, with Admiral Rice in the chair. In the course of his remarks the chairman said that at no period in the history of the Hunt had the affairs of the East Kent been in such a prosperous condition. He thought they would agree with him that the financial report was very pleasant reading, the receipts making a total of £1,644. He was thankful to say the report was one the like of which they were becoming accustomed to. They proposed to give the Master an additional £200, and they need not say how well he deserved it, as the position of the Hunt was in a great degree due to him. Lord Guilford said

he had been asked to propose a resolution which he thought without doubt would be most popular with the meeting, and that was a very hearty vote of thanks to the Master (applause). Perhaps the best test of his popularity and his success was the excellent position in which the financial affairs of the Hunt stood. The Master was so well known to them all that it really needed very few words from him, but he might say that the Master was universally popular. He had spared no pains or trouble to show them good sport; in fact, they would agree with him when he said that Mr. Selby Lowndes had shown them the best sport they had seen for years. Mr. Dadds seconded the proposition, saying that he considered the East Kent was very lucky in having one of the best amateur huntsmen in England. The Master, in reply, spoke of the friendly feeling entertained towards him throughout the whole country, and thanked the landlords, shooting tenants and his friends the farmers for their great support in the past.

At this meeting it was proposed to buy two cottages adjoining the kennels, which motion was carried.

CHAPTER X

SEASONS 1906–1908 : PRESENTATION TO THE MASTER

DURING the early part of the season 1906 a sad accident took place, resulting in the death of the second whipper-in. The following account appeared in the local journal :

> While the East Kent hounds were being exercised on Tuesday in Waldershare Park, some of the young hounds broke away from the body of the pack after one of the deer which had jumped up in front of them. The second whip, Edgar Verney, was soon after them, and had to gallop some distance to stop them. He had to jump several flights of wattles in his course, which he successfully did, but his horse came in contact with some sheep-netting, and both must have fallen heavily to the ground. When he was picked up it was discovered his left arm was broken, and he was unconscious. He was taken to one of Lord Guilford's houses, and a doctor was soon in attendance, but Verney never regained consciousness, and died from concussion and internal injuries at twelve o'clock the same evening. He leaves a widow who is in delicate health, and five small children, and much sympathy is felt for them in the Hunt. Verney was a man very much liked and respected by all the following of the pack. Earl Guilford asks us to announce that a subscription list has been opened for the widow.

The subscriptions amounted to £315, which were presented to the widow. Edgar Verney, like his father before him, had never been employed

BERT SAVAGE.
1ST WHIP.

JOHN CODY.
2ND WHIP.

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outside the Selby Lowndes family, and the Master felt his death very keenly.

Jack Grant was first whipper-in and kennel huntsman at this period, and remained as such for eight years. He was a first-class man in the field, and a marvel at viewing a fox in a country in which this is often most difficult. Bert Savage was promoted to fill Verney's place as first whipper-in. Savage had been with the Master ever since he left school, and learnt to ride with him, working himself up to be second horseman. He was a nice smart lad, a good horseman, and is now a capable man in the field and much liked. He can ride a rough horse over a country as well as most men, and when promoted to be second whipper-in he had been with the Master twelve years. He once rode a pulling horse through a great run in the Vale, the horse taking control of him most of the journey and jumping magnificently. An officer asked Bert how the horse carried him, and received the naïve reply, given with a broad grin: "*Not 'alf, sir!*" He is now first whipper-in. Ted Carroll succeeded Jack Grant. He was a most knowledgeable man in kennel and a thoroughly trustworthy gentleman's servant, though in the field the large coverts bothered him in viewing foxes. The Master always maintained that Jack Grant was undefeated at viewing a fox, but his weight had so increased that he had been obliged to make a change.

Sport during 1905–1906 was well up to the

average, and during the course of the season the following good story against the Master went the round regarding one hunt. Hounds met at the Cavalry Barracks, Shorncliffe. There was a very large, unruly field out, all very much 'on the ride,' with the result that the first fox found in Parracker Wood was mobbed in all directions. The Master, after mild, then more heated, rebukes, became exceedingly angry. At last the fox got away, and hounds ran well and fast for the first two miles until reaching a deep ravine and railway cutting, where they checked. The Master was unable to help them, as he could find no possible way to get across. Seeing a man pointing on the far side, evidently where the fox had gone, the Master swore at him uncommonly hard (even for the East Kent M.F.H.) for not holloaing hounds on, and threatened to thrash him when he got to him. On crossing, the Master rode straight towards the culprit (who was still mutely pointing), shouting, "Why the devil didn't you holloa?" On closer acquaintance he found *him* to be only a scarecrow!

That same evening the Master was to meet several of his soldier friends at the Folkestone theatre. He left by the 7.19 train from Lyminge, and as usual on the South-Eastern line, the train was delayed at Shorncliffe station. The Master started fuming, and putting his head out of the carriage window, shouted to the guard: "What the h——'s up now, guard?"

"The signal, sir!" was the reply.

Exit the M.F.H., after giving the guard a shilling for his sharp reply.

During this same season hounds had a very long, tiring draw without finding a fox. At last the Master heard an old favourite hound open on a fox, as he thought, and knowing the old dog's voice was gospel, cheered and harked the pack forward. But for once the M.F.H. had made a mistake. The first whipper-in, riding up at the moment with a twinkle in his eye, said: "I'm afraid it's wrong this time, sir. It's old Sepoy speaking because he's sat on a thorn, sir." This rather reminds one of the days when there were trencher-fed hounds in the Bedale country, and the hound-gatherer simplified his task by pulling the ears of the first hounds he collected, so that they howled and thus drew their comrades to the spot.

At the period with which we are now dealing the East Kent M.F.H.'s son, then thirteen years old, was allowed to have a small pack of harriers which he hunted during holiday time. He was invited by several farmers to hunt over their land, and with his two little sisters in attendance, and a field consisting of a few farmers, enjoyed good sport for several seasons. At a fixture of his father's hounds at Halfway House the youthful M.H. was presented by Mr. J. D. Maxsted with a silver hunting-horn on behalf of the followers of what were that day described as 'The Handley Cross Harriers.'

In the latter part of season 1906–1907 the following announcement appeared in the local papers :

The farmers and subscribers of the East Kent Hunt consider that the time has arrived when some recognition should be made to the Master for the sportsmanlike manner in which he has hunted the country for the past seven years, and they have decided to present him with a testimonial. Subscriptions are therefore invited, and will be received at the Capital and Counties Bank, Canterbury, A. E. Dadds, Bargrove, Hythe, Chairman of the Committee, and the honorary secretary, J. E. Churchill, Folkestone.

Everyone was very pleased to hear that Lord Guilford had offered to have the presentation made at Waldershare Park in conjunction with the opening fixture of 1907–1908.

The following are some extracts from the Master's diary regarding this season :

September 1st, 1907.—Shot with Hardy at Sandling ; very hot day. Plenty of birds; killed 40 brace ; very sporting day ; four guns.

September 2nd.—Sunday spent in kennels ; had some friends to see the hounds and horses. Went to see an old friend, Dadds, in the afternoon, and discussed some port and nuts with him.

September 3rd.—Shot with Guilford at Sandwich ; walked very hard all day ; heat intense. Had a rare day's sport. Killed 70 brace.

September 4th.—Shot with Guilford again at Sandwich. Birds very numerous. Real hard day. Killed 54½ brace, a brace of duck, 3 snipe, and 14 rabbits.

September 5th.—Cub-hunting at Waldershare. Met at the Wilderness, 4.30. Rare good morning. Heavy dew and capital scent. Killed a brace. Played the Hunt against farmers on the Waldershare cricket ground in the afternoon, and had a close match and most exciting. Note.—Cubbing

in the early morning and a huge lunch after are not conducive to a straight eye at cricket in the afternoon. The Hunt got beaten!

September 6th.—Shot round Waldershare Park. Killed 30 brace. Nice day's sport; birds wild.

September 7th.—Cub hunted at Waldershare. Met at Easling, and had another good morning with a useful scent. Killed one cub after routing the wood for two hours, and ran a brace to ground later on. Very useful morning's sport. I was challenged by the house-party at Waldershare, where we were all staying for a week's cubbing and shooting, to run Lord Guilford's head keeper, a man much my own weight. I had a trial with some of the house-party for a sprint and walked. They backed the keeper in consequence. I beat him by 5 yards in 150!

September 8th.—Shot at Sandwich. Had another hard sporting day. Killed 36 brace. Five guns. Walked from 9.45 till dark.

September 10th.—Monday finished a very great week by cubbing at Waldershare, meeting at Captain Wood. Found a lot of cubs. Scent fair. Hounds worked hard and covered themselves with glory by killing a brace of cubs and a badger. Shot in the afternoon round the Park; killed 10 brace.

On November 9th, the first day of the regular season, the presentation took place, the following account of it appearing in the local paper:

East Kent Hunt

Presentation to the Master

Monday will be regarded as one of the most interesting days ever known with the East Kent Hunt. On that day the opening meet of the season took place. Waldershare Park, the home of the Earl of Guilford, was the rendezvous of an immense field, well over a thousand people assembling to watch the proceedings. A magnificent breakfast awaited the farmers and friends in the dining-room of the Hall, thanks to the lavish hospitality of the Earl and Countess of Guilford.

Amongst those present were Lord and Lady Guilford, and their house-party consisted of the Dowager Countess of Guilford, Lady Muriel North, Admiral Rice, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Hardy, M.P., Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Howard, Mr. and Mrs. Selby Lowndes, Colonel Laurie, Lieut-Col. and Mrs. Martindale Vale, Mr. Pomfret, Mrs. Honeywood, and Mr. J. E. Churchill. During breakfast there were exhibited outside the house a handsome silver salver, silver models of huntsmen and hounds, an illuminated address containing over 200 signatures, and an envelope containing a cheque for £200. These were to be presented to Mr. H. W. Selby Lowndes, the popular Master of the Hunt. After breakfast these were taken into the dining-room, and the Earl of Guilford asked all present to fill their glasses. Shortly afterwards he said that, as they all knew, they were assembled there that day for a combined purpose. One was to hold their opening meet, and the other to make a presentation to their Master, Mr. Selby Lowndes, for the very sportsmanlike way in which he had conducted the Hunt for the past seven years. (Loud applause.) The speaker had been asked to make the presentation some months ago, and that invitation he was very pleased to accept. The point then rose as to when and where—he was speaking of back in the early summer—the presentation should take place. It was eventually decided to postpone the event till the opening meet, and as soon as that was settled he asked that he might make the presentation in his own home, and to have the opportunity at the same time of showing some hospitality to all in the Hunt. (Applause.)

He had heard it asked why they were making a presentation to the Master. One person asked him if the Master was resigning. He had replied: "No, certainly not. He is not doing anything of the sort, but we are so grateful to him for the way in which he has managed the Hunt, and the sport he has shown, that we have decided to give him a presentation now, and not to wait until he is too old or infirm to hunt." (Applause.) Then at the present time no better feeling ever existed between the Master of the Hounds and all through the Hunt. (Hear, hear.) When Mr. Selby Lowndes became too old and infirm to hunt those hounds, they would then

make him another presentation to excel the one they were going to make that day. (Applause.) No words of his (the Earl's) could adequately express the thanks of the Hunt to Mr. Selby Lowndes for what he had done since he first came to the Hunt in 1900. He would mention some plain facts, which spoke for themselves. In the first place the enormous response that had been made to that appeal for the testimonial, as witness some 300 signatures on the illuminated address—(hear, hear)—was one great fact which showed how the Master was appreciated. Secondly, they could not have a more striking instance of the sport he had shown than by the ever-increasing fields, and the numbers that followed the Hunt. Last, but not least, a still more striking instance than any, was the plain fact of his popularity among the farmers, for it was amongst the farmers themselves that the idea of giving that presentation originated. They heard a lot, and read a lot nowadays, about huntsmen being born and not made. He did not think there could have been any doubt in Mr. Lowndes' case. (Applause.) That gentleman would probably tell him that he was brought into the world to send foxes out of it! (Laughter.) Whether this was the case or not, he *did* know this—that Mr. Lowndes started his career as a huntsman at the age of thirteen, when he hunted a pack of harriers, or, rather, he handed them over during school term and hunted them through the holidays. They next heard of him in South America, and the speaker ventured to think that it was out there that Mr. Selby Lowndes' tongue first made its acquaintance with the grindstone. (Laughter.) They had evidences of that even now. (Laughter.) What Master of the Hounds in the world was there who did not lose his temper at times? (Hear, hear, and laughter.) From what he (the Earl) had heard of Mr. Selby Lowndes, he provided excellent sport in South America. When he was seventeen years of age he came back to England and took over the Wells Harriers. There he hunted with great success. For about three years after that he went up and tried his hand on the Yorkshire moors with a pack, when again he had great success, and in 1900 they got him as Master of the East Kent Hunt, and there they were going to keep him. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Mr. Lowndes

was a born huntsman ; he was not only that, but he was a good professional man ; he thoroughly understood the management of horses and hounds, and he was very diplomatic and understood the management of his country. The speaker might deal at length with Mr. Lowndes' capabilities, but like the rest of them, he was dying to be out into the field, and would not do so. He would ask Mr. Dadds, as representing the farmers, to say a few words.

Mr. A. Dadds remarked that, as to the testimonial, he and the rest of the farmers thought that it would be much better to give the presentation to the Master now and hold him, than give him one when he was leaving. As one of the farmers, he especially wished to thank Mr. Selby Lowndes for the condescension he had shown, and for the way he looked after the interests of the farmers during the hunting season. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Lowndes had been working all the summer for the benefit of those who rode in the winter. From the expression on the Master's face it would appear that he had a big fence and was anxious to get over it. (Laughter and applause.)

The Earl of Guilford then said :—

" Mr. Selby Lowndes, on behalf of all throughout the Hunt I have very great pleasure in handing you this illuminated address, together with this plate, as a token of deep gratitude to you for what you have done for us during the last seven seasons, for the sport you have shown and for the excellent manner in which you have conducted the affairs of the Hunt." Addressing the gathering, he added : " I ask you to raise your glasses to drink to Mr. Selby Lowndes, Mrs. Lowndes and all the little Lowndes, and to wish them health, prosperity and happiness, and may he be spared for many seasons to hunt the East Kent Hounds." (Loud applause.) Lord Guilford wound up with the following limerick :

There was a M.F.H. named Lowndes,
Who was simply A 1 with his hounds ;
When given some plate
He was asked to orate,
But he bolted with two hundred pounds.

(Laughter and applause.)

PRESENTATION PLATE (E.K.H., NOV. 1907.)

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The reception of the toast was remarkably enthusiastic; cheers, musical honours and the hunting cry resounded all over the huge mansion.

Mr. Selby Lowndes then replied. He said that no words of his could sufficiently express his thanks for the beautiful gifts they had presented him with that day. He would value them more than anything he had, and he was sure his son, who had come home for his holidays the previous Friday, would value them to the same extent when he (the speaker) had gone to ground. It was a very great pleasure and satisfaction to him to think that the testimonial originated from the farmers, who were, as they knew, the backbone of hunting in England. During the seven years he had hunted East Kent he had had the greatest support and kindness that any Master could desire. He was specially pleased that the presentation had been at Waldershare Park. Lord and Lady Guilford's hospitality was well known, and everyone would join him in wishing them a long life to enjoy the respect and esteem in which they were held in East Kent and other parts of England. (Hear, hear.) Continuing, Mr. Lowndes said that he thanked them from the bottom of his heart—and he had a very big heart—(laughter)—for no Master in the world had been treated better than he, and as long as he gave satisfaction he would love to stay amongst them. (Loud applause.) In conclusion he thanked them all, and said no Master in the world had had seven years' happier life than he had had in East Kent.

It was during this season (1907–1908) that the Master suffered severely from a bad eye—'uritis'—and was under an oculist, who tried in vain to stop him hunting, though not even the threat that he might have to keep in a dark room for weeks made any difference. He consented, however, to wear black spectacles, and had one or two nasty falls in consequence, as he could not see clearly in them. One day his eyes became so bad out hunting that

he had to give up at noon and leave Jack to hunt hounds. Five minutes after the Master had parted from his pack he turned round to find six couple of hounds had come alongside with him, and refused to leave him. Suddenly a holloa was heard. The Master out with his horn and went with the six couple to the holloa. The body of the pack, hearing the familiar voice of their Master, were soon to him and the six couple. They ran twenty-five minutes to ground, much to the amusement of the field, who had fortunately been able to join in the run.

The season proved up to the average, and during December, January and February some very good runs fell to large fields. An example of vulpine cuteness was witnessed during a good run from Betteshanger. All trace of the fox was lost after forty minutes. The Master made his ground good round the village to which they had run and was completely mystified. Returning to the middle of the village, all the outbuildings were inspected without result. Just as the search was to be given up, one of the villagers caught sight of the fox curled up round the chimney on the top of a cottage. The first whipper-in got a ladder and clambered on to the roof, gave the fox's brush a pull and away he went. Landing safely on terra firma, he gave the Hunt another fast thirty minutes before being killed. A strange, and very well self-satisfied, lady was out on this day. She overrode

hounds once or twice, and eventually the Master admonished her roundly. Afterwards the lady came up to him and apologised profusely. "My dear lady," answered the Master, "I don't blame you, but I *do* blame the d——d fools who sent you out."

A tremendous hunt took place from Alkham during January 1908, a fox found in Poulton standing up before hounds for three hours over a most rough and difficult country. Hounds practically never left him, and killed him in Clark's Nursery, near Dover. This was a bye-day, Lord Guilford and Major Geddes whipping in.

One day hounds coming home from hunting after a hard, good day, passed through Bishopsbourne village. The school-children, who were just leaving for home and were much excited at seeing hounds, forthwith arranged a game of 'fox and hounds.' One boy was overheard to say, "I will be old Selby, but I shall be forced to swear, so don't you tell my mother."

This seems an appropriate point at which to pause to give a synopsis of the Master's diary regarding sport in East Kent from 1900 to 1910:

1900–1901.—Hunted 90 days. Stopped 11 days, 3 blanks Found 24 litters of cubs and 78 foxes. Killed 28 brace Ran 10 brace to ground.

1901–1902.—Hunted 95 days. Stopped 9 days, 1 blank Found 25 litters and 85 foxes. Killed 37½ brace. Ran 3½ brace to ground.

1902–1903.—Hunted 85 days. Stopped 8 days, 2 blanks. Found 26 litters and 87 foxes. Killed 24 brace. Ran 15 brace to ground.

1903–1904.—Hunted 117 days. Stopped 10 days, no blanks. Found 24 litters and 141 foxes. Killed 29 brace. Ran 12 brace to ground.

1904–1905.—Hunted 109 days. Stopped 10 days, no blanks. Found 26 litters and 163 foxes. Killed 30 brace. Ran 16 brace to ground.

1905–1906.—Hunted 101 days. Stopped 4 days, no blanks. Found 27 litters and 172 foxes. Killed 32 brace. Ran 19 brace to ground.

1906–1907.—Hunted 103 days. Stopped 24 days, no blanks. Found 30 litters and 137 foxes. Killed 29½ brace. Ran 14½ brace to ground.

1907–1908.—Hunted 111 days. Stopped 9 days, 2 blanks. Found 23 litters and 122 foxes. Killed 28½ brace. Ran 17 brace to ground.

1908–1909.—Hunted 83 days. Stopped 23 days, 1 blank. Found 24 litters and 118 foxes. Killed 27 brace. Ran 11 brace to ground.

1909–1910.—Hunted 93 days. Stopped 8 days, 4 blanks. Found 21 litters and 124 foxes. Killed 26½ brace. Ran 16½ brace to ground.

Total days hunted, 1900 to 1910	975
Total days stopped by weather	118
Total days blank	13
Litters of cubs found	253
Foxes from November 1st	1,227
Foxes killed	584
Foxes run to ground	289
Total number of keepers entertained during 10 years	450
Paid keepers, including annual dinner, litters of cubs and finds, etc.	£1,229 0 0

CHAPTER XI

SEASONS 1910–1920

It was the Master's custom, at the end of the season in his own country (about the middle of April), to go down to Wales and hunt with some of the Welsh packs up till May 1st, the Rev. Chase Green-Price, brother of the sporting baronet, the late Sir Richard Green-Price, usually being his host. The following cordial invitation to the Master on the last occasion he visited Wales was typical of his host's hospitality:

My Dear Selby Lowndes,—I want you to do me a favour, i.e. come and stay with us on Friday, the 15th. We will then hunt on Saturday. I will take you to judge at the puppy judgings of the Radnorshire and West Herefordshire hounds Monday, and you will be handy for our meet on Tuesday at Bucknell. We are going to have a hunt in the dear old Beacon. I have altered the day to suit you, and we shall get a real old Beacon fox that will take some catching. I have booked horses for you, so that you will be all right. Only write and say that you will be at Bucknell station Friday evening and I shall be happy. I must have no refusal. My wife and I will be delighted to see you.

Yours truly,
H. Chase Green-Price

Needless to say, the Master accepted this kind invitation, and on the 15th (after the E. K. Hunt point-to-point races, which were held at Smeeth that day) travelled down to Wales, arriving in time to change

for hunting with the Teme Valley on the following day. Hounds met at Knighton. The pack consisted of half-bred Welsh and English hounds—rare workers. Mr. Lote, the Master, was one of the old school of yeoman masters. The hunt was rough and ready but sporting in the extreme. The whole establishment betokened work, not looks. The Master's and his only whip's coats were mulberry colour from age, their caps and boots being equally sport-worn. Hounds found at once in Brook Gone (the Master's covert), and ran over a rough, hilly country; the pack, doing all the work alone for two hours, marked their fox to ground in some rocks, after as fine a piece of hound work as man could wish to see. A second fox found later, ran until dark, when hounds were with difficulty stopped. On Monday, April 15th, 1909, the East Kent M.F.H. judged at the Radnorshire and West Herefordshire Puppy Show. His services were much in request at puppy shows and horse shows, Peterborough amongst others. Also his advice was much sought after by *soi-disant* M.F.H.'s concerning running a hunting establishment on a sound, practical and economical basis. There is an entry in his diary of a novel hound show at Whitby, at which he judged the Staintondale trencher-fed hounds in the arena of a crowded circus at ten o'clock at night. The old-world huntsman entered the ring on horseback with his hounds, in full hunting kit, and left after the judging with a touch of his horn. The whole

arrangements were probably unique in the annals of hunting.

To continue the Master's visit to Wales. On the 19th, when the Beacon day mentioned in the parson's letter took place, he records in his journal that

A real old moorland Hector was found in some gorse, and away he went straight as a bee-line for his native moorland, tearing on with a burning scent over the virgin soil of the grand enclosures until they dashed out into the open moor, over seas of heather. Not a sign of human habitation, not a covert to shelter a wild animal for leagues, but a grand waste of heather, with an occasional bog, to make which a detour had to be made. On, on they went, through coombe and dale, hill and dell, at a killing pace, without the symptom of a check. After running an hour, at last hounds checked in a rocky ravine, but only for an instant. Old Wadlow had it, and away they went, faster than ever, pointing for a tor in the distance, some three miles ahead. The fox, just ahead, was viewed by the whip—it was a race for the stronghold of earths beneath the tor or who-whoop. Now they view him! How they race! It's all up; his strength fails him. Nimble has him—a struggling mass, and in a minute a hundred tatters of brown. As game a fox as ever lived died!

April 20th.—Hunted with the United at Plowden station; found in Mr. Plowden's coverts, and had a long, good hunt through Stors of two hours, and ran to ground in some rocks at Six Mile Point. Hounds worked well and a rare cry. Were only once cast during the run.

April 21st.—Ludlow Races. Returned after the races to Knighton.

April 22nd.—Hunted with the Teme Valley at Dolieau; found in the heaths and ran over a vast, rough country for an hour and a half. Finished the week with another day with the United, returning on the Wednesday, after a day with the Hawkstone Otter Hounds and a day's trout fishing.

At about this period the Master's brother, Mr. Cyril Selby Lowndes, was showing the Burstow

followers great sport. At Christmas-time there was considerable excitement over the following incident. Cyril and a friend or two were riding home late, having dined out. Coming through East Grinstead, a policeman took exception to their light-hearted behaviour, and caught hold of one of the horses. Cyril very soon rode him off, and drove him through the door into a grocer's shop. The officer forthwith locked himself in in a great funk. Cyril, seeing a labourer coming along, shouted to him: "I say, man, bring a spade; I've got a dog fox in here and want to dig the divil out."

Then hurrah for the hounds of the Burstow,
The world cannot say they're the Wurstow,
You should see Selby Lowndes
Gallop over the Downs,
Which gives him a terrible Thurstow.

(Ed. *Sporting Life.*)

Mr. Cyril Selby Lowndes was mounted one day by Captain MacTaggart, Master of the Old Surrey Stag-hounds. The day was a memorable one, as the six best men from the Mid-Kent Stag Hunt came up to compete against the six straightest Old Surreys. They had a great run, Mr. Cyril Lowndes leading the whole field all through the brunt. The Old Surrey men all beat the Mid-Kent easily, the latter not proving by any means a difficult lot to vanquish.

Mr. Cyril Selby Lowndes remained the head of the Burstow from 1911 till the outbreak of war. The country was then amalgamated with the Old Surrey.

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Sport, from accounts in the Master's diary during the seasons 1910, 1911 and 1912, continued to be of high order, good runs taking place in all parts of the county. The number who came out with the East Kent, and subscriptions, testified to the popularity of the Hunt. The amount subscribed had now reached the large sum of £2,200—over double the amount collected the year before Harry Lowndes took over the Mastership. Foxes were found in all parts of the country. The Vale coverts at Smeeth were taken over by Mr. John Scrimgeour, a sportsman from the Old Surrey, and foxes were no longer molested, his brother taking the Aldington shoot adjoining, for the good of the Hunt. The result was that splendid gallops were enjoyed over this fine piece of country. The Master always maintained a Prime Minister had a difficult part to fill, but his office was a bed of roses compared with that of a Master of Hounds. He once said a Master had to be ' one of those wonderful people who pleased everybody, for even if Diana came down from Olympus with a pack of heaven-born hounds, and hunted so close through fire and flood as to kill all the foxes in the Denge, someone would complain that the hunts of the goddess were too slow, and that she herself was too fast.' Amongst the M.F.H.'s many trials, poultry and damage claims are not the least. Many amusing stories could be told in this connection. Let one suffice.

An old woman met the Master one day and

stopped him, grumbling that her cow had calved the night before and the foxes had taken the calf. "For God's sake, then, go home, my good woman, and take care of the old cow," replied the Master, as he rode on.

An entry in the diary continues :

November 5th.—Shot with Meakin, driven partridges, very sporting birds ; 35 brace.

November 6th.—Met at Acrise Mill ; found in Nine Acre Wood ; forty minutes of the best, to ground. Found again in Riggins and rattled hard for fifty-five minutes. Killed. Many falls. Heavy going.

November 7th.—Shot with Toynbee at Bourne Park. Killed 31 brace. Nice shoot.

November 8th.—Met at Aldington—Large Field. Found in the Knoll and ran a seven-mile point in fifty-five minutes and killed in the open at Postling Vents.

November 12th.—Shot at Beachborough—115 pheasants, 60 rabbits.

November 14th.—Met at Barfrestone ; had a good hunt from Waldershare, and killed our fox in the tunnel in Kearsney railway cutting.

November 16th.—Shot at Horton Park—120 pheasants, 20 rabbits.

November 19th.—Shot at Sibton Park—340 pheasants, 6 hares.

November 21st.—Met at Lydden. Found in the gorse and ran a clinker for an hour and forty minutes. Killed in the middle of Whitfield village in a w.c.

November 22nd.—Shot with Pomfret at Mystole. Killed 217 pheasants and 50 rabbits.

November 25th.—Shot at Spiney Wood and killed 370 pheasants, 14 rabbits.

The following letter from a member of the Hunt at this period refers to the short period the Master was unable to hunt hounds (although out hunting)

owing to having had eight of his teeth knocked out by a bad fall:

DEAR MASTER,—I have sent you some oysters. I hope your teeth are better, but I do implore you not to use your horn until your mouth is put straight. Your voice carries farther than most people's horn. You have not an idea how much good it does your reputation in East Kent to let someone else hunt your hounds. Many people who don't remember the country before you hunted it do not recognise what a past master in the noble science we have in you. Let your teeth have a chance, and at the same time let people have a chance to realise your worth as a huntsman. They are already doing it. This is meant for common sense and not flattery. God forbid that I should flatter anyone. My wife says I never did her. Hope to be down Monday and find you better.

Yours sincerely,
G. C. GREEN.

It was in August 1914 when everything looked so bright for another successful season, the hunt being in the height of its prosperity, that the European War broke out. The strength of the packs in nearly every country was cut down, likewise the number of days' hunting per week. With all Hunts the financial question became serious, and the strictest economy was essential. A meeting of the Committee of the East Kent Hunt called by the Master in October 1914 decided to reduce the number of days' hunting from four to two per week, and that the pack should be reduced from fifty couples to thirty. Hounds being at this critical time valueless to sell, it was suggested twenty couple should be put down, but the Master, after the meeting, attended the Corn Market, and before 6 p.m. that

evening had secured walks for the forty hounds amongst the farmers in the Hunt, and thus saved the pack. Every farmer not able to take a hound gave willingly a contribution to the upkeep of one.

When they came to commandeer the Master's horses (eighteen of which they took) an amusing tale went round the county that three of the Master's best horses had got lost, but after the rest had been commandeered the three were found in West Wood, living on acorns, and another couple had evidently gone wrong suddenly and had been well blistered.

During the few previous years the Master had introduced Welsh blood into his pack from his friend Mr. Curre, Master of the Chepstow. This proved the greatest benefit, the third cross producing the hardest and best driving hounds ever seen in East Kent. Their music could not be overestimated, and many were the letters of appreciation the Master received from farmers who had heard hounds running in their different districts. Some of these messages came from farmers who, although not able to hunt themselves, loved to hear the cry of hounds.

Seasons 1914–1915–1916, probably owing to the small fields consequent upon war, produced the best three seasons, taking them all through, for good average sport during the reign of the present M.F.H. There was no one out to head foxes, no indiscriminate holloaing, and hounds, not being overridden, did most of the work themselves. The

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Master called his hounds at that time the 'Let 'em alones,' and his love and praise for his pack almost amounted to worship. The Master carried on with the help of one whip and Jimmy Downes. His two sporting little daughters, Violet and Dorothy, however, never missed a day, rode well up to hounds in all weathers, and helped view a fox or turn a hound. Like their brother, who served abroad with the R.F.A. and acted as M.F.H. whilst on active service in the East, they inherit their sire's great love for hunting. It may be mentioned that, when war broke out, the Master's son, aged eighteen, joined up at once as a Tommy and gave his age as twenty, his father getting him a commission shortly afterwards.

Among the many fine hunts during seasons 1914–1915–1916 the diary records the following:

November 3rd.—Cat and Custard Pot. Bolted a fox from the artificial earth and had a very fine thirty minutes and killed in the open. Found again in Ashley Wood and ran for fifty minutes, and killed at Westenhanger Racecourse.

December 5th.—An exceptionally brilliant day for Smeeth. Found in Park Wood and ran all over the whole of the Vale for one hour and forty minutes. Killed in the open. An old dog fox. Found a second fox in the Plantation and ran over the Brabourne Courts forty-five minutes and killed at Lympne.

December 12th.—Met at Denton. Very good day. Thirty-five minutes. Killed from Denton Gase, and fifty minutes to ground from Stony Lane.

December 15th.—A real hard, good day. From Lydden, running all day long. First fox fifty-five minutes to ground. A second fox ran for two hours from Lord's Wood. Hounds

killed him at Broom Park. A third fox from Waldershare ran us out of sight. Home at 8.30.

January 12th.—From Tilmanstone. Found a fox in the Betteshanger Firs and ran over a large tract of country, including Waldershare, Coldred and Lydden. Killing after an hour and twenty-five minutes at Old Park, in the open.

Other fine hunts took place on January 25th, February 10th and 16th, including a meet on foot in the Covet on March 2nd, when hounds covered themselves with glory, killing a brace of foxes by themselves.

It may here be mentioned that Harry Lowndes does not allow snow to prevent him from hunting. The late Colonel Anstruther Thompson records excellent sport he enjoyed in the snow, and going out on foot, H. S. L. succeeded frequently in accounting for a fox. He has had many a hard day's sport, tramping in the snow for miles, making much use of his terriers, trying likely earths and bolting many a fox which provided fine sport, and seldom, if ever, losing his hounds. At this period many Canadians hunted with the East Kent, and supported the Hunt financially, also many officers from the front sent subscriptions. Several of them, alas! were killed leading their men, among whom were poor old Creswell, Davidson, Egerton, Furley, Kidd, Soames, Friend and poor old Bill Howard. Apropos of war and the Army, it is a curious coincidence that both Sir John French and Sir Douglas Haig are connected by marriage with two of the most famous families in the history of hunting—the Selby Lowndes and

the Pelhams, Earls of Yarborough. The former have been prominently associated with the sport for over a century and a half. Lady French, before her marriage, was Miss Elena Selby Lowndes, daughter of Mr. R. Selby Lowndes, of Bletchley, Bucks. Sir Douglas Haig married the Hon. Dorothy Maud Vivian, sister of Lord Vivian and Lady Worsley, daughter-in-law of the Earl of Yarborough, whose family have hunted the Brocklesby for generations.

As has already been said, the season of 1914–1915 could not have been excelled, hounds being able to hunt and run nearly every day during the season, and accounting for no less than fifty foxes. It was at this period that Harry Lowndes formed a regiment known as the East Kent Mounted Scouts, principally of farmers ineligible for the Army, all of whom had to mount themselves and pay for their own uniforms, rifles and other equipment. The Master used to call them 'The Devil's Own,' and when asked why, replied, "Because they are God's Rejected." The War Office made them the handsome allowance of a red brassard with G.R. on it. Their headquarters were at Bridge, and the strength of the regiment was 100. The Earl of Guilford was the Honorary Colonel, and the Master Squadron Commander. There were five troops, consisting of A, B, C, D and E, viz. Bridge, Ashford, Deal, Minster and Faversham. Drills took place every day of the week—mounted

drill, rifle practice, foot drill, patrol work and manœuvres—with the regulars for scouts, when wanted. The object was, in case of invasion, to have trained scouts to direct the regulars in any and all parts at night-time.

At the end of the season 1914–1915 the general meeting of the Hunt was held, as usual, at the Fountain Hotel, Canterbury. It was largely attended, and considering the serious times, the finances of the Hunt were highly satisfactory. Lord Guilford announced at the meeting that the Master had been most generous in waiving his guarantee, but at the same time he did think they should make a big effort to obtain it, as it would be hard lines if the Master should suffer in these critical times. He therefore moved a resolution that they make a strenuous and immediate effort to raise the sum of £150 to bring the total to £1,000 for the year.

Mr. Kingsford, in seconding, considered it only a right and proper thing to do, more particularly as they had heard the Master was in a position to meet them still more generously in the coming season by hunting the country for £700. A very hearty vote of thanks was accorded the Master for the whole-hearted and sportsmanlike manner in which he had hunted the country during the past season.

The M.F.H., in responding, said that he had with his own whip been able to kill a great many more than the average number of foxes, and that he now took the opportunity of thanking the farmers for

foregoing all claims for poultry and damage, and that he trusted to keep the old sport going as long as he had the health in his body to do so.

It was during the season 1915–1916 that, on behalf of some friends and farmers in the Hunt, the Master was presented at a lunch at the County Hotel, Canterbury, with an illuminated address, a cheque for £114, and silver models of two of his favourite hounds. The testimonial was organised by Mr. Churchill and presented on behalf of the subscribers by Mr. T. Spanton. The address read as follows :

To William Henry Selby Lowndes, M.F.H. We, the undermentioned friends and farmers of the East Kent Foxhounds, request him to accept the accompanying cheque, which we hope will in some measure make good the loss he has sustained owing to his stud of hunters being commandeered, and we trust that in the near future it will be possible for him to hunt the county under normal conditions.

(Signed) J. E. Churchill, Hon. Sec. February 12th, 1916.

Mr. Spanton, on presenting the testimonial, said they had had some good Masters in East Kent, but to-day they had got '*It*'—*The* Man, one of the best, bred and born to it, and he did not believe there was a farmer in East Kent who could say a word against him.

Season 1915–1916 commenced on September 1st, and no doubt owing to the abnormally wet state of the ground (which suits East Kent), it was as good a season for scent and sport as could be wished for. Although no claims were paid for poultry and damage, foxes abounded everywhere, and runs took place

in all parts of the country, day after day. Hounds seemed always to be able to run, and the Welsh-bred hounds added much to their glory. The woods and valleys in East Kent rang with their music and they seldom missed their fox. The Master spent his spare time, as usual, shooting. The farmers took some of the larger shoots and the Master shot with them, and good fellowship reigned supreme. The Vale provided some excellent runs—Herringe Brooks, Beaksbourne and Aldington the best. The field often totalled fifty horsemen, despite the critical times. Denton, Waldershare, Acrise, Wootage, Betteshanger, West Woods, the Swingfield Valley, Alkham and Wingmore, all provided their share of sport.

A run worthy of record from the last-named took place on December 19th.

Hounds met at Wingmore and found at Wootage Wood. Getting away on excellent terms with their fox, hounds began to run hard at once, and raced away to Wootage Green, on to Womenswold, through Oxney Wood to Hailsham Firs, thence over Cooting Downs at a terrible pace to Woodlands, on to Knoland Shave to Adisham, and then continuing over the railway to Broom Wood. Hounds had all the time been running, or rather racing, wearily mute. They now, however, began to feel for the scent, and as they got upon the cold, bleak ground above Hadling it was fairly brought to their noses, and luckily so. As it was, bellows opened and Jimmy Downs roared, roared as surely roarer never roared before. We had barely time to turn our horses to the wind to ease them for a few moments before the pace began to mend from a catchy scent to a holding scent. They again began to run hard to Littlebourne, going through the Park and on to Ickham, bore to the right to Lee Priory, and going on to

Bramling Wood and Goodnestone Park, reached Old Court. It was between these two places I had my hunting-cap driven over my nose and eyes. Bearing to the left to Pinney, he next went over to St. Albans Park. Right-handed to Nonnington, crossed the Chatham and Dover Railway to Roberts Firs, picking all the bad scenting ground as he went. It was no use ; his fate was sealed, and though he began to run short and dodge through the hedgerows, they hunted him yard by yard, and he made an effort for his life and went to Acol Wood. Here my horse declined, and I had to leave him kicking mournfully and staring at his flanks. A farmer who had joined in the hunt late lent me his horse. Here hounds were close to their fox, and pressing him hard. He faced the open once more and ran on to Snow Down, to Coney Wood and Fredville, where hounds had a view and raced into him, after a hunt of three hours, hounds having run twenty-five miles.

It was a very fine hunt, talked about for many a day, and the Master received the following letter with regard to it :

DEAR MASTER,—What a hunt ! I am glad indeed it had such a capital finish. I stopped at Goodnestone Park and had twenty-three miles home. What a good fox—well hunted, splendid hound work, a great performance ! I shall go through it again with the Rev. Biron to-day.

Yours sincerely,
ARTHUR BLAXLAND.

A story went the rounds at this period that the Master, when dining out one night with a large party, asked his partner who the man with the blue face was, sitting opposite. " That is my husband," came the answer. " Then you can tell me, madam, if he is blue all over ? "

During the season 1915 (March 19th), when hounds

were hunting in the Alkham Heights, they ran a fox close to Kearsney, and the field experienced the never-to-be-forgotten sight of an enemy seaplane dropping bombs and our guns firing and the shells bursting in close proximity. The Master's diary makes a note—they had a good day, and killed a fox in the open at 6.30.

This mention of war reminds one of a story told by the Master's son when home once on leave. He and Major Fowler were doing a bit of coursing on forbidden ground in France, and were caught just as they had killed a hare. The Military Police threatened to report them, but after a little judicious parley all was settled. They asked the Military Policeman where he hailed from. "Kent," was his answer, where he had been a keeper in the Tickham Hunt. Asked if he had ever had a day with the East Kent Hounds, he replied, "Yes." He had forgotten the Master's name, but he remembered that he was "a big bloke what swore 'orrible."

During the season with which we are dealing the Master was asked by a lady why he cut and pulled the horses' tails so short. "Because, madam, it gives them a cheerful countenance," he replied.

The 1917 season ended on April 8th with a run (as *The Field* said) which will remain green in the memory of those that were present for many a year to come.

'Hounds met' (writes one who was present) 'in the square of the old-fashioned village of Elham.

A field of some sixty horsemen, mostly soldiers, including many Canadians and a good sprinkling of farmers from all parts. It was a perfect hunting day as hounds moved off to draw the plantation above Elham, and ere the last horseman had reached the angle of the long hill the Master was rolling about on foot in the luxuriant evergreen, now wholly visible, now all but overhead, his cheery voice encouraging the invisible pack to wind him and rout him out. That they only too willingly obeyed. Not a sound disturbed the stillness of the scene. The waggoners on the road stopped their wains, the ploughmen leaned vacantly on their stilts, the shepherds deserted the bleating flocks and the turnip-pullers stood erect. In the air all was life and joy and liberty—liberty, equality and fox-hunting. Suddenly a low whimper was heard in the thick part of the covert. The Master cheered the hounds to the echo. "Ho-o-ick" to Truelove. "Ho-o-ick," screamed he, in a voice which thrilled every soul and set the horses a-capering. Ere his long screech was finished there was such an outbreak of melody! Scent was good, and there was no safety for reynard in covert.

'In the midst of the bustle and the fray a loud, shrill view-holloa proclaimed the thief of the world stealing away over the grassy hill beyond. "Hold hard, gentlemen," roared the Master, clapping spurs into his horse, and in a twinkling had his hounds out of covert and away. Then there was such a

scrimmage, such crowding, jostling and elbowing among the eager and jealous ones, all bent on beating each other. Hounds were running a field ahead, going great guns. "F-o-o-r-r-rard,"! screamed the Master, and with a twang-twang-twang on his horn, settled himself in his saddle as he went. "In for a stinger, Master," observed Will Webster, the first whip, as they both flew the second fence together and all the hounds are on. "He's away for Bladbean," observes Will. "Hope so," replies the Master. "For-r-rard," screamed Will. And so they ran, flying and for-r-rarding together. None of the field being able to catch them, on, on they go, the hounds leaving Elham Park, Quilters, Fryam Park, Pet Boltom behind them. Through Bourne Park, Gorsley, Reed Mill and Kingstone. 'Yonder he goes,' at last cried the Master, taking off his cap as he viewed the fox stealing away over the valley to the covert. "Tally ho!" screeched John Hope, the keeper, with his hat in the air. "He's a good 'un," exclaimed he, as the Master galloped by, grinning with delight.

'They were presently through the covert and rounding the hill, hounds still pressing forward and carrying a famous head, ran by Park Gate, through the whole of the extensive West Wood Coverts, where hounds were brought to their noses for the first time. Leaving the woodlands behind, hounds again changed from hunting to racing, the Master riding, as usual, with all his heart, with all his mind,

with all his soul, with all his strength. On they went to Sibton, over the Skeete Valley away to Postling Vents, over Tollsfoot Hill to Bluehouse, where he is viewed. It is nearly over with him. He will hardly reach the small fir plantation at Beachborough. The hounds gain on him. It is a race for his life. Yet the covert saves him. What a crash! Every hound is in, and every hound is hard at him. He is put to his last shifts. Now old Diphthong is at his heels, and death is not far off. Now quick, if all give their tongues. Little Truelove, how she works him! Gip and Punch, the terriers, are now squeaking at him too. It is just up with him—gods! what a crash. They make the whole place resound. That was a short turn. There, now they have him. Who-oop! Three and a half hours, making a 13½-mile point, and actually covering twenty-five miles. The finest hunt seen in the county during the present generation.' Sir Arthur Markham, of Beachborough Park, in front of whose residence hounds killed their fox, entertained the whole field. The mansion was full of Canadian wounded, who witnessed the finish amidst the greatest excitement. This ended season 1916–1917.

Whoo-whoop, they have him, they're round him now—
They worry and tear when he's down!
'Twas a stout hill fox when they found him;
Now—'tis a hundred tatters of brown.

We have now come to recent times, and sport

which is still fresh in the memories of those fortunate enough to throw in their lot with the East Kent. Suffice it, therefore, to say that during the season of 1918–1919 sport was uniformly good, many red-letter days being added to the long list with foxes from the never-failing Waldershare, Acrise, Denton and Elham coverts. The going was very heavy, and, as usual, scent served well under these conditions.

In 1919 the farmers in the country not only sent the Master hay, straw, and corn to the value of £300, but also a cheque for £115 when his horses were commandeered by the Government. Apart altogether from the assistance this gave the M.F.H. in difficult times, he was both touched and gratified at this very practical mark of appreciation and sympathy from those over whose land he has for so many years ridden. Undoubtedly the success of the East Kent Master has been in a large measure due to his popularity with the agriculturalists in East Kent. This is not merely the result of admiration for a good sportsman and a good horseman. His tact and consideration for farmers and his own *bonhomie* have had a good deal to do with it.

Major Meakin, of Barham, another close friend of the Master's, has also been a tower of strength and a cheery and most useful influence in the country. Of him Mr. Lowndes frequently writes with admiration and gratitude in his diary as an essential part of the very backbone of the Hunt.

Mr. William Colthup also comes in for frequent

mention as being a tremendous asset to the country, and a sportsman in the very best sense of the word. Amongst the ladies to whom the M.F.H. expresses his gratitude about this time and onwards are Mrs. Trehearne and her two hard-riding daughters, who have done much behind the scenes to further the interests of sport in East Kent. There are frequent entries in Mr. Lowndes' journals expressing appreciation and thanks to these good sportswomen for their energies on his and the Hunt's behoof.

Perhaps the outstanding run of the season 1920–1921 was from Waldershare. An Easting Wood fox gave a ten-mile point before being pulled down at Walmer.

In 1921–1922 foot-and-mouth disease sadly interfered with sport in East Kent, as in other parts of England, but hounds were able to hunt in the Denge woodlands, and a lot of fun was enjoyed in those enormous coverts. Possibly some who had not done so before realised that there is, after all, a joy in woodland hunting and in hound work and hound music.

The season 1923–1924 found sport in the Acrise part of the country excellent. Many first-rate hunts had their birth at Paddleworth Gorse, Elham Park and Wadden Hall. The foot-and-mouth scourge, however, again interfered with sport, and the whole Hunt establishment was transplanted from the affected area to Ham Street, where hounds and horses were put up for a week. Woodland hunting was again the order.

The 1924–1925 epoch was good throughout. There was a succession of excellent gallops from the preserves at Wadden Hall, Cockshot, Yorklet and Springwood, which latter provided five classic hunts. West Wood was the scene of many good woodland days, whilst Walderchain Wood and Lydden Hill Wood always responded to the call, and many were the stout foxes found there. There was never a blank day throughout the season; hounds hunted on seventy days, and were stopped once by frost.

This season completed the twenty-fifth year of Mr. H. Selby Lowndes' Mastership of the East Kent, and in honour of the occasion the ladies of the Hunt arranged a ball at the Grand Hotel, Folkestone, for Friday, February 27th, 1925. Amongst those who gave their patronage were Lady Cholmondeley, Lady Guilford, the Hon. Mrs. Mountjoy Upton, the Hon. Mrs. Atkinson, Mrs. George Selby Lowndes, Mrs. Trehearne, Mrs. Eric Neame, Mrs. Whale Ure and Mrs. Baird. On the following morning hounds met on the Leas at Folkestone.

CHAPTER XII

EAST KENT FARMERS

Here's a health to the yeoman farmer,
  Without whom we'd fare but ill;
A thoroughly sporting, friendly lot,
  Who ride as well as they till.

SHOW me the country in which the farmers are keen on hunting and with whom the M.F.H. is popular and I'll show you where sport will be good and where hunting affairs run smoothly. In these days when Socialistic tendencies grow, and when comparatively few farmers ride to hounds, it is refreshing to hunt in a country like East Kent, in which the tillers of the soil are sportsmen almost to a man. Year by year, as Mr. Selby Lowndes' journals have increased in number, they have recorded the encouragement and kindness he has had from the farmers over whose land he has ridden, and many are the tributes he pays to them in his diaries. He has had no trouble whatever in getting his puppies walked, though when he came into the country first there was hardly a puppy sent out. Over and above this the farmers have taken in all his horses to grass for him during the summer months *gratis*, and in a great many cases the farmers have themselves subscribed towards the upkeep of the pack. During the hunting season

many of the farmers in the country invite the Master to meet at their houses. On these occasions they provide refreshments for all comers with unbounded hospitality. In addition to all this, the greatest benefit to the Hunt is derived from the arrangement carried out by the larger farmers regarding the poultry and damage fund. They each represent a district, look into every claim immediately, and settle it without delay, which is of the utmost importance in any country, and saves a considerable sum during the year. They also help by distributing the thousand farmers' lunch tickets provided by the Master and members of the Hunt in connection with the lunch held at the annual East Kent point-to-point races, each making himself responsible for so many parishes. The farmers have entertained the Master to complimentary dinners on many occasions at the Saracen's Head and the County Hotel, Canterbury. Most convivial evenings they seem to have been, too. The following menu in one of the Master's diaries shows the E.K. farmers are not untutored in gastronomics :

MENU

Native Oysters
Thick Oxtail Soup
Turbot. Shrimp Sauce
Roast Saddle of Mutton. Roast Beef
Celery. Brussels Sprouts. Potatoes
Roast Pheasant. Chips. Salad
Fruit Salad. Tipsy Cake. Jellies
Roes on Toast
Dessert. Coffee
Hock. Champagne. Port

The following account of the proceedings of one of these dinners appeared in a local newspaper :

MR. SELBY LOWNDES ENTERTAINED AT CANTERBURY

Were any proof needed of the popularity of Mr. H. W. Selby Lowndes as Master of the East Kent Hunt, and of the estimation in which he is held by the tenant farmers of the East Kent Country, it might have been witnessed at the County Hotel, Canterbury, on Thursday night, when a thoroughly representative gathering of tenant farmers, ranging from Folkestone to Chartham, entertained Mr. Selby Lowndes, and they also had, with him, as their guests Mr. Virgil Pomfret and Mr. Harries, joint hon. secretaries of the E.K.H., and Mr. Malcolm Burr, M.H. Those present included Messrs. Champion, Goodson, Elgars (2), Maxsted (2), Buss, Murton, Spantons, Coleman, Marchant, Tubb, Downes, Easter, Arnold (3), J. E. Quested, Robinson, Fritz, Spanton, Birch, Hardinge, Millen, Stennet, Gunson, Rawe, Collard, Harvey (2), Captain Spanton, R. Hobbs, S. Hobbs, Sillers, Green, Tanner, Blaxland, Bates, Kelsey, etc. The gathering was convened to show Mr. Selby Lowndes the appreciation his efforts to provide sport, and his Mastership of the Hunt, had given to those present, and the enthusiasm displayed during the evening was befitting the event. The arrangements were capably made by Arthur Marchant. Amongst the letters of regret received was one from Mr. Dadds, the father of fox-hunting in E.K.H., who wished good luck to the best Master he had ever hunted with. The toast of the evening, ' Success to fox-hunting,' was proposed by the chairman, who gave some most interesting recollections of his fifty years' connection with fox-hunting, under the various Masterships of Squire Brockman, Lord Guilford, Mr. Sworder, Captain Fitzroy, Mr. Westcar, Mr. Bligh, and now their present Master. (Cheers.) He, the chairman, considered it was their duty to help the Master who had treated them so generously ; he gave them four days a week, his agreement only being three days. Their Master was a very clever man, and there was no better huntsman in England. (Cheers.)

Before sitting down, the chairman had the pleasure of presenting to the Master a silver hunting-horn inscribed: 'Presented to H. W. Selby Lowndes, M.F.H., by the tenant-farmers who hunt with the E.K.H., February 6th, 1913,' and said the only condition attached to the gift was that the Master should blow a blast—which he did, making the old room resound with melody. The toast was drunk with the greatest enthusiasm and Kentish fire. Mr. Selby Lowndes expressed his appreciation for all the kindness they had shown him in the thirteen years he had been in the country, and promised as long as he gave satisfaction, and had as many friends as he saw that night, he should remain with them. He would only say that if every Master was treated as well by the farmers as he was there would be very few resignations and it was the only country he knew where the farmers subscribed towards hounds.

Mr. Troward Spanton proposed the health of Mr. Marchant, the organiser of the complimentary dinner, and that gentleman responded. Mr. Egerton Quested toasted the Chairman, and Mr. Kelsey briefly replied. Mr. Burr, M.H., in proposing the farmers, said that there was not in any other county in England such a good lot of farmers as in East Kent. Mr. Spanton responded, and said, as farmers they very much appreciated the sport and sportsmanlike way in which the hunt was run. Mr. Tanner proposed the Hunt secretaries and Mr. Pomfret responded. On a move being made for the club, the Master was carried shoulder high down the town by his friends the farmers, who asked him to give the 'Gone away' on the hunting-horn just presented, which he did, making the old cathedral town re-echo for miles; in fact, Mr. Maxsted, four miles away, told them, out hunting the following day, he heard the horn distinctly.

En passant, it may be mentioned that the East Kent M.F.H. is credited with being one of the most effective blowers of a hunting-horn in England, whilst his view-holloa may be heard for miles when he gets a fox on foot. On one occasion, when he had found

his fox, an old farmer standing near was heard to exclaim: "Damme, hark at him! Doesn't he put the demi-semi and forty-tissimo into it?"

A year or two later the Master, while cubbing in Easling Wood, had a fall and knocked out some of his teeth, leaving others very loose. Coming into the ride, he asked Captain Spanton to pull the loose ones out, but luckily Dr. Graham was there and stopped this being done. He took him to his house, sewed up his lip and bound his head up tight. This stopped the Master blowing his hunting-horn for a month or two. During that period he was compelled to resort to one with a reed in it, which, when blown hard, went up to a squeak, and made him swear with disgust. Verily it is written:

H is for horn;
The few that can blow it
Are born to the thrick,
Just the same as a poet.

The morning following the dinner referred to hounds met at the Black Mill, Barham Downs. The farmers who had entertained the Master the evening before turned up to hunt in great force, bringing with them a motor-car laden with eatables and champagne. They extended hospitality to all comers.

In his diary the Master says:

This was only one of many instances of great kindness and sportsmanlike fellowship shown on all occasions by these good fellows—the backbone of fox-hunting in East Kent. Whether in or out of the hunting-field, a hearty welcome

is always extended by them, not only to me, but to all within the category of sportsmen.

On many occasions the farmers entertained the Hunt cricket team to lunch during the Hunt matches *versus* themselves. These cricket matches were inaugurated by the Master, and took place annually, either at Sibton Park or Waldershare. The greatest rivalry existed between the two teams, both the Hunt and the farmers being able to put a formidable eleven into the field. The cricketing days were thoroughly enjoyed, amidst much chaff and good fellowship, which all helped to keep the Hunt popular during the summer months. The Master, playing in a match, Lyminge *versus* Errington, made the grand score of 115 runs off his own bat, hitting no less than twelve sixes. Captain Irby, who was captaining the Errington team, said to the M.F.H. while batting, if he hit him out of the ground for another six again he would shoot foxes. Despite this the Master hit the next ball clean out of the ground, thus causing no little amusement. The Master, by the kind invitation of Lord Guilford, took over a team of farmers every year to play against the Waldershare tenantry. This match was played on the Waldershare cricket ground, which is second to none, and a capital day's fun was much looked forward to, his Lordship entertaining all his tenantry and their wives and friends right royally to lunch and tea, his yeomanry band playing at intervals during the day.

The farmers also arrange coursing days on their own and adjoining farms, to which the Master is always asked. The best of sport is enjoyed, hares being plentiful and the long dogs good. Among those who invariably had a day were Messrs. Sladen, Robinson, Baker, and Collard, who generously wined and dined all friends. The Master used also to attend the Romney Marsh Coursing Club fixtures, and on one occasion, coming home in a large public motor-car, they stopped and called at Mr. John Jones' house and had *tankards* of ale forty years old. That old and, alas! departed landmark, Harry Jordan, served out the ale, and added gin to the already strong 'old Tom October,' which proved more than most of the company could stand! John Jones was a name to conjure with in coursing and all sporting circles in Kent, and the Coursing Club at his death was re-christened, 'The John Jones Coursing Club.'

Among the many well-known sporting farmers in the Hunt may be mentioned first and foremost Mr. Dadds, who, with Mr. Sladden, has hunted with the East Kent for over fifty years. Mr. Dadds is one of the old school, a born sportsman, and has been a great support to all the E.K. Masters with whom he has hunted. Chairman of the Poultry and Damage Committee, and a committee-man of the Hunt, he is always more than ready to do all in his power, summer and winter, to promote the interests of fox-hunting. The Master regularly visited Mr.

Dadds on Sunday afternoons, and, with one or two keen fox-hunting soldiers, discussed the sport of the past week and future prospects over a bottle of port wine and nuts. Among those who made up these Sunday afternoon parties the 11th Hussars were, in their Canterbury days, much in evidence, in the persons of Captain Sutton (a great friend of the Master's) and Captains (as they were then) Lakin, Lowther, Heseltine, Mitchell and Houston, all of whom were keen hunting men.

Messrs. Kelsey, Quested, Hobbs, Maxsted and Colthup, in common with Mr. Dadds, served on both the Hunt and Poultry and Damage Committees to represent the farmers. They are all good men and true. Mr. Quested, a most able man and successful farmer, is well known as a great Kent sheep-breeder, his rams and pedigree cattle being sent all over the world. His advice on all agricultural matters is much sought after. He always hunted on Wednesdays in the Vale, and rode good cattle. The name of Hobbs has, time out of count, been prominently associated with fox-hunting in East Kent. Mr. Maxsted, a farmer in a large way, is a mighty hunter, and seldom misses a Monday or Friday. He once told the Master that 'his father, who was not a hunting man, had warned him that if he hunted he would go to Hell, but having, as he thought, discovered heaven instead, he had brought up the whole of his large family to hunt in spite of this prophecy.' Mr. Kelsey is another extensive farmer and keen hunting man, with the

very nicest disposition in the world, and beloved by all who know him. Mr. Downes from St. Margaret's is, according to the Master's diary, 'without exception one of the finest sportsmen it has ever been my lot to meet—a sportsman to his finger-tips. He hunts, with few exceptions, every day hounds meet, and very often with the West Street Harriers the other two days. No distance is too far for him, and no day too long. He has a wonderful knowledge of the run of a fox, and is a great help in the woodlands. He never goes home until hounds do, very often having twenty-five miles to hack after hunting. He rides small, cheap horses, but they all go; it is marvellous how he gets there. He does a day's business before he starts hunting, and is never out of the saddle. He was a Radnorshire man by birth, and when he came, years ago, to Kent, it was certainly a great acquisition to the East Kent Hunt. He takes sport as it comes, never grumbles, and is admired by one and all as a sportsman and a good fellow. He supplies me with cub-hunters for nothing, and is always anxious to do all in his power for the Hunt.'

John Robinson, of Wringham, another sporting farmer, always has two meets a year at his house, and entertains all comers. He is a great friend to the Hunt, and looks after foxes well in his district.

Two more excellent fellows were Messrs. T. Spanton and Marchant, two welter-weights, neither of whom rode less than nineteen stone. Both

farmed very largely and successfully, hunted as often as possible, and went well to hounds. One day, in the Vale, hounds were running a cracker, Messrs. Spanton and Marchant going great guns, when they came to a great stiff stake and binder. They pulled up a second and looked at it. "*Must* we have't, Troward?" said Arthur. "Yes," replied Troward, "*we must!*" And over they went, both landing in at the death—a credit to themselves and their horses. No two men went better to hounds in the Master's early days than these two heavy agriculturalists.

Messrs. Blaxland, Clements, Cathie, Newman, Bates, Goodson, Rawe, Stennet, Gunson, Hammon, Smith, Buss, Coleman, East, Prebbles, Petley, Goldup, Elgars (2), Arnolds (3), Harvey, Spantons (3) and Birch, followed hounds regularly at this time, and were all great mainstays and pillars of the Hunt.

Among the farmers who, though not hunting themselves, did all in their power to further the sport, may be mentioned Mr. Henry Rigden, who very kindly gave Paddlesworth Gorse free of rent. Mr. Rigden is a fine shot, and a very wealthy farmer and landlord. Though they do not complete the list, the following names must be included: Messrs. Broadley (2), File (2), Moses (2), Smith (3), Vickers, Kelsey, Hogbens (2), Elsey, Bolding (2), Tubb, Goldup, Pilcher, Questeds (3), Speath, Gillet, Palmer, etc.

The Master tells many amusing stories of Palmer and Gillet. For instance, one day, when calling

on Palmer, he entered the sitting-room, and found Mr. and Mrs. Palmer surrounded by their family of at least a score of healthy children. The Master was much astounded at the size of the family, and remarked: "How do you know when they're all at home, George?"

"Oh," he replied, "see that washing basket? Well, when that's full of boots we know they are all at home."

Calling again some time afterwards, the Master chaffed George Palmer, and asked him how the washing basket and family were.

"Oh," said George, "we've had to have a new rim put on the basket." George had made another entry in the stud book since the Master's previous visit.

The Master used to go to Mr. Gillet's once a year to have a Hunt with the Tickham Hounds. His host always complained of the severe attacks of asthma from which he suffered, and that he had not slept in bed for years, but always in his arm-chair. Later he got married and his asthma was cured.

Speaking of farmers in the Vale recalls a story of one of them who told the Master he had had 'a sheep queer,' so he 'butchered it' and took it into the house to his wife to see if she could make any use of it. Later on, when he asked her if she had been able to use it for food, his wife replied: "Well, I have given the liver to the charwoman, and we'll wait and see how *she* is in the morning."

There was a noted old farmer at Ash who was a confirmed poacher. The Master often used to visit him, and always gave him £5 a year on the understanding that neither he nor his friends poached foxes.[1] This proved highly successful, and when the old man, whose name was Jones, died, he left the Master the whole of his poaching impedimenta. The old man often turned up at fixtures in a pony-trap, and when a breakfast was being given, or refreshments were handed round, he helped himself liberally. On one occasion he took half a dozen cigars. This the butler reported to Mr. Peto, the host entertaining the field, and Mr. Peto gave orders that at the next meet the butler should hand old Jones a cigar, instead of allowing him to help himself. This was done, much to the old poacher's annoyance. A year after, when hounds met again at the same place, Jones turned up. He got out of his trap, took the bridle off his pony, and produced a turnip out of his cart. Throwing it to the pony to eat, he exclaimed: "There now, eat *that*. Don't eat Peto's grass! maybe he will grudge it you." Mr. Peto was so amused that the old man was allowed to help himself ever afterwards.

In the same season of 1908–1909 the farmers were

[1] 'Nimrod,' in his *Warwickshire Tour*, tells us of a similar plan followed by the great Mr. Corbet. Says 'Nimrod':—'The celebrated and well-known Woolford Wood had been for some time infested with fox-catchers, who took them alive and sent them to different parts for sale. By way of putting a stop to this destructive traffic, Mr. Corbet entered into an engagement with these men (three in number) to give them £40 per annum on their promise to discontinue it; and which sum they received every Christmas Day during the remainder of the period of his and also of Lord Middleton's hunting the country; and to the credit of the men it should be said that they adhered to the faith of their engagement.'—Editor.

up in arms with indignation following upon some trouble with a Mr. X, who, although renting some 4,000 acres of the best Vale and coverts and sending a son and daughter out hunting, never by any chance had foxes in his preserves. When approached by a specially convened meeting of the committee, he was full of plausible excuses, and then waxed exceedingly irate. Few men even in these days like to be exposed or even suspected as guilty of vulpicide. The Poultry and Damage Fund was blamed for the dearth of foxes, and also the farmers. The latter, hearing this, signed the following 'round robin' and had it read before the general meeting of the Hunt :

We, the undersigned farmers, resident in the Parishes of Aldington, Smeeth, Brabourne, Wye and Brook, wish to place on record our sympathy with the Master, Mr. H. W. Selby Lowndes, and the members and subscribers of the East Kent Hunt at the shortage of foxes in the above district during the season 1907–1908 ; and further, we wish to state that we are at all times pleased to see the hounds on our land, and to do everything in our power in the interests of fox-hunting. It having come to our knowledge that blame has been imputed to us for the dearth of foxes in the before-mentioned districts, we hereby protest against any such accusation, which is utterly unfounded, and we trust such statements will not be repeated as it is our desire at all times to do everything in our power for the benefit of the hunt, and we trust that the East Kent Hunt may in the future enjoy good sport in the Vale country for many years.

As the farmers in each district looked into their own claims for damage by foxes, and all their names appeared on the list quoted, fox shortage could

hardly be laid at the door of the farmers. The Master made it his business to write to Hampshire, in which country the alleged fox-destroyer had resided, and received the following letters from Masters of Fox-hounds regarding Mr. X's reputation as a fox-preserver :

The Manor House,
Greatham,
W. Liss, Hants,
19th December, 1908.

DEAR MR. LOWNDES,—I have been able to make inquiries about the gentleman you mentioned to me in your letter of December 3rd, and I find that he did not bear a good name as a preserver of foxes.

Yours very truly,
FREDERICK CORYTON.[1]

The late Mr. Coryton, at the time this letter was written, was Master of the H.H. The other answer to the same inquiries was from Sir Richard Rycroft, Master of the Vine Hounds 1903–13, and ran :—

Dunmer House,
Basingstoke.

DEAR MR. SELBY LOWNDES,— . . . I should be very much astonished if anybody found foxes where X has the shooting. He never lived in the Vine country, but in the adjoining H.H., of which I am a member.

Yours very truly,
RICHARD RYCROFT.

This same X also stopped the local harriers from hunting over his shoot after February 1st, because he said it disturbed his partridges pairing ! !

Everyone was very sorry for the son and daughter out in the hunting-field. The remarks made within

[1] Continuously Joint Master of the H.H. from 1888 till 1909.—Editor.

their hearing were by no means complimentary to their fond parent, though in most cases not meant for their hearing. The son felt it keenly, and even asked the Master if he should cease hunting. He was a good sportsman, and the Master always spoke most kindly of and to him, and was pleased to see him in the hunting-field. The shoot has now changed hands, the present tenant being a hunting man and good fox-preserver.

It remains only to repeat what was said at the outset that the farmers in East Kent are the very backbone of hunting in the country, keen sportsmen almost to a man and the best of good fellows.

POINT-TO-POINT RACES

Soon after he became Master of the East Kent Mr. Lowndes revived the point-to-point race meetings at Smeeth, which had lapsed for many years. From the outset their reinstitution was a success, but perhaps the best remembered of the long series was the meeting which brought the season of 1913–1914 to an end. Every farmer in the E.K. country was entertained to lunch by the Master and members of the Hunt, about 800 of these stalwarts sitting down. A description of the meeting, which appeared in the *Folkestone Herald* under the signature of ' Felix,' graphically describes the day thus :

When the editor of the *Herald* requested me to run over to the point-to-point races at Smeeth, the prospect of a few hours with hunting men and the sturdy Kentish yeomen and

their friends was a welcome change. There is nothing like horse-racing to bring people together, and I thought, as I squeezed into the train of some twenty coaches that left the Central Station for Smeeth soon after noon, what a jolly lot we were. . . . Up yonder on the hill and knoll is an immense crowd of 10,000 people gathered about the many large tents erected. These point-to-point races have a semblance of real genuine sport which has been associated with English gentlemen and tenant farmers for generations past. There were farmers from all parts of East Kent, ranging from Ham Street to St. Margaret's, from Folkestone to beyond Canterbury. In the luncheon tent, seated at three tables, were some 600 farmers, and if you want to see health, gaze on these hundreds of weather-tanned faces, all telling of the open-air life. Everything is put on of good and substantial fare by the proprietor of the 'Rose and Crown,' Elham, and he has had something to do to satisfy the needs of the large company, but it was done and done well. Suddenly the clatter of knives and forks and the merry chatter ceases, and view-holloas are heard from hundreds of throats. Mr. Selby Lowndes has just entered the great marquee, and he receives a welcome such as only sturdy Kentish yeomen can give. The Master joins in the lunch, and when the inner man is satisfied, that fine old sportsman, Mr. Dadds, who has hunted for fifty years with the E.K.H., proposed the health of the Master. Mr. Dadds said in all his experience he had never known a Master hunt a country better than the present one, and trusted he would be spared to carry out the duties in the same sportsmanlike manner.

Mr. Selby Lowndes, who, on rising, was greeted with volleys of Kentish fire, said he would like to thank them for that greeting, which bore the hall-mark of genuineness. During the season they had accounted for 37½ brace of foxes and there were plenty left. He hoped, after the sportsmanlike way he had been received by one and all in East Kent, to remain among them for some years. He hoped they had all enjoyed themselves at lunch, and that they had come into the tent with their stomachs empty, and would go out with them well filled; likewise that they had come with their pockets half-full, and would return home with them over-bulging.

East Kent Farmers

Outside everything was very gay, the crowd consisting of all the leaders of society throughout East Kent, farmers, and tradesmen from Folkestone, Sandgate and Hythe. The bookies were there in great force, and what a pretty scene it is! From the elevated spot you can obtain a splendid view of nearly the whole of the 3½-mile level course; out yonder in the distance is Aldington Church, a noted landmark and the furthest point of the course. The bell has just rung for the first race, and riders are weighed out and are now parading before a critical crowd. The bookies shout until their veins swell up as ropes, and everyone is backing their fancy. "They're off!" is the cry. Before passing the winning-post they will have had to negotiate twenty fences and five brooks. The course is in excellent condition, the racing first-rate. The starters were numerous.

FIRST RACE: EAST KENT HUNT LIGHT-WEIGHT CUP

Open to members and subscribers of the Hunt, owners and occupiers of land within the limits of the Hunt. To be ridden by owners, or by a subscriber to the Hunt of not less than £7 7s.; 12 stone and upwards.

Captain Campion's b. g., The Laird V.	Owner (1)
Mr. J. Speed's b. g., Little Keneton	Owner (2)
Mr. Petherick's bl. g., Chough	Owner (3)
Mr. Ramsay's ch. m., Oondooroo	Owner
Mr. Cliff's b. m., Jane	Owner
Mr. Carr's g. g., Cottontail	Owner
Mr. Eliot's b. g., Irritation	Owner
Captain Barnard's b. g., Fair Exchange	Owner
Captain Lefroy's ch. m., Jinny	Owner
Mr. Bovill's ch. g., Butter Scotch	Owner
Mr. Bovill's ch. g., Gilded Pill	——
Mr. Green's ch. m., Ladybird	Owner
Mr. Preston Whyte's b. g., Balaclava	Owner
Major Lamont's b. g., Golden Mace	Owner
Captain Jordan's br. m., Medore	Owner
Mr. Capel's ch. m., Sancisse	Owner

Comte Laborde's g. m., Clair de Lune	Owner
Captain Cresswell's br. g., Seskin	Owner
Mr. Board's m., Fermayne	Owner
Miss Leney's b. g., Limerick	——
Mr. Chichester Constable's b. g., The Ripper	Owner
Mr. Wright's g. g., Hermit	Owner
Major Parker's ch. m., Kincora	Owner
Miss Baker's br. g., Shamrock	——
Captain Olive's br. g., Paul	Owner
Captain Hill's b. g., Ginger	Mr. Penrose
Mr. Terry's ch. g., Ginger	Owner

OPEN RACE

A silver cup for horses fairly hunted with any recognised pack of stag-hounds, fox-hounds or harriers during the season 1913–1914.

Mr. R. Wakefield's g. g., Grey Plover	Owner (1)
Captain Campion's br. g., Snipe III.	Owner (2)
Mr. Petherick's bl. g., Tregeagle	Owner (3)
Lord Ipswich's b. g., Whitfield	Owner
Mr. Butler's b. g., David	Owner
Mr. Eliot's b. g., Trade wind	Owner
Captain Burnard's b. g., Bristles	Owner
Mr. Bovill's b. g., Maxine	Owner
Mr. Chichester Constable's br. g., The Ripper	Owner
Mr. Fitze's b. m., The Maiden	Owner
Mr. K. Hunter's b. m., Moss Rose III	Owner
Mr. Cliff's b. g., Small Scotch	Owner
Captain Grubb's br. g., Thomas Brown	Owner
Mr. Lloyd's b. g., Bones	Owner
Mr. Granet's b. m., Lady Constance	Owner
Major Parker's ch. g., Rosmanagner	Owner
Miss Baker's br. g., Shamrock	——
Mr. R. Cheesman's bl. g., Roderick Dhu	Owner
Mr. Bluemantle's b. g., Sir Hugh	Owner
Mr. C. Clarke's ch. m., Tibbie II.	Owner
Mr. Chamber's ch. g., Dalesman	Owner
Captain Watson's b. m., Dancing Mistress	Owner

East Kent Farmers

EAST KENT HUNT HEAVY-WEIGHT CUP

Fourteen stone and upwards, to be ridden by owners or subscribers of not less than £5. All other conditions as for East Kent Light-Weight Cup. Entrance fee: £1 per horse.

Captain Campion's b. g., Lochray	Owner (1)
Mr. Cliff's b. m., Socks	Owner (2)
Captain Kidd's ch. g., Red Spider	Owner (3)
Mr. Ramsay's b. g., Brown Bread	Owner
Mr. Dalton's b. g., Jester	Owner
Mr. Harries' b. g., Maxim	——
Mr. Petherick's ch. g., Gossoon	Owner
Mr. H. Selby Lowndes' b. g., Rainbow	C. Selby Lowndes
Comte Laborde's g. m., Clair de Lune	Owner
Mr. Keran's bl. g., York	Owner
Mr. Keran's b. g., Dawn IV.	——
Mr. Ellot's bl. g., Hill town	Owner
Major Lamont's b. g., Golden Mace	Owner
Mr. K. Hunter's ch. g., Kismet	Owner
Mr. Baird's br. g., Topthorne	Owner
Captain Grubb's ch. g., Cold Steel	Owner
Dr. Bradbury's br. g., Banshee	Owner
Colonel Kennedy's b. g., Coronation	Owner
Captain Cresswell's b. g., Murphy	Owner
Mr. Reid's b. m., Ruby XI.	Owner
Mr. Drummond's b. g., Sportsman	Owner
Mr. M. Selby Lowndes' bl. g., Flashlight	Owner
Mr. J. Speed's ch. g., Stockings III.	Owner
Mr. Gibb's ch. g., Rufus	Owner
Mr. Davidson's ch. g., Shannon	Owner
Captain Foster's b. g., Peter	——
Major Webster's ch. g., Jim Larkin	Owner
Major Webster's ch. m., Mullonac	——

LADIES' CUP

Presented by the Ladies of the Hunt, open to horses the property of farmers resident within the limits of the Hunt. To be ridden by farmers or their sons, or subscribers of not less than £7 7*s*. Weight 12 stone 7 lbs. or upwards Winner received cup and purse, value £7. Second received £5. Third £3.

Captain Spanton's b. g., Captain	—— (1)
Mr. Hobbs' b. m., Lady	Owner (2)
Mr. Birche's b. g., Quick Step	—— (3)
Mr. Downe's b. g., Nap	——
Mr. Downe's b. m., Rosebud	——
Mr. T. Spanton's b. g., Bennett	Major Lamont
Mr. T. Spanton's b. g., Tired Jim	Mr. Tomkins
Mr. Funnell's bl. g., Kildare	——
Mr. Hammon's b. g., Harkaway	Mr. Wright
Mr. Baker's b. g., K.N.	——
Mr. C. Rendell's b. g., Hoton Park	Owner
Mr. Birche's g. m., Grey Wing	——
Mr. Funnell's br. m., Fearless	——
Mr. Millen's ch. m., Empress	——
Mr. Downe's b. g., Fag End	——
Mr. T. Coleman's br. g., Zephyr	Owner
Mr. A. Marchant's b. g., Galloway	Mr. Tubb
Mr. Pilcher's br. g., Unknown	Owner
Mr. Gillet's ch. g., Tip-Top	——
Captain Spanton's b. g. ——	——

There is perhaps no country in which there are more point-to-point races held than in East Kent, as the following extracts from the Master's diary for the month of April, 1914, show:

Monday, 13*th*.—Held our point-to-point races at Smeeth. Twelve thousand people present, 100 entries in the four races; 750 farmers sat down to lunch. The weather was gloriously fine. The meeting was the best ever held.

Tuesday, 14*th*.—Ashford Valley point-to-point races held at Brook. Nice day's sport. Entries small for the five races. Racing fair. Weather very fine. Enjoyable day.

Wednesday, 15*th*.—Met at Alkham to finish season. Found in Oak Wood, ran twenty minutes to ground. Found again in Chiltern Banks, a vixen, ran to ground. Found in Sladden Wood, an old dog fox. Ran one hour and forty minutes right away to Cheriton, and on to Ladywood, and killed. A very excellent day. Found again (a vixen) in Sunny

Banks, and ran to ground in Lad's Wood. Finished a rare good season.

Thursday, 16*th*.—3rd Hussars Point-to-point Races at Smeeth. Very nice day. Entries large, and racing good. The 3rd Hussars entertained everyone right royally. The course was similar to our own and far larger than the Mid-Kent Stag or Ashford Valley have, which are only galloping courses, and nothing to jump.

Friday, 17*th*.—Went to Aldington with my terriers and dug out a badger. After four hours' hard digging Gip and Punch and Vic did a lot of good work and stuck to the badger all the time.

Saturday, 18*th*.—Mid-Kent Stag Races at Sutton Valence. A large crowd. Entries fair. Racing Moderate. Course far too small; 5 races. Weather fine. Nice day's sport finished a good week.

CHAPTER XIII

HUNTING PARSONS

Here's a health to the parson despising control,
Who, to better his parish, his health or his soul—
On my honour, I think he does each—
Five days in the week rides well up to hounds,
On the sixth duly goes his parochial rounds,
And on Sunday devoutly can preach.

EAST KENT has always rejoiced in the possession of not a few hunting parsons who have held their own across country and have been all the more respected because of their love of a day in the saddle. In a sporting country like the East Kent hunting has given the cleric some common platform on which to meet his flock, and has done more to bring the cloth into close touch with the people than years spent in a study over abstruse theological works would do.

The Rev. Mr. Nottidge, one of the old school, a fine horseman and sportsman, was a constant follower of East Kent during the earlier years of Harry Lowndes' Mastership. At that time he was well advanced in years but still a thoroughly typical, robust, old-fashioned English gentleman, very different from the majority of mincing, afternoon-tea-drinking, black-coated gentlemen of to-day. Apropos of the latter, a bishop once sagely remarked:

"It is not the white breeches that the Church need be afraid of, but your long-coated, black-gaitered gentlemen."

Mr. Nottidge was a friend and admirer of the Master, and frequently asked him to dine. His cellar was the envy of all good judges. The old man had a wonderful palate for port, and his dinners (always at six sharp) throughout were faultless.

On one occasion Mr. Nottidge had a weight-carrying grey to sell. He had given £80 for him—a sound, good horse, but a little too much for the old parson, who was then well over seventy. The Rev. F. Timins and Mr. Tommy Young, friends of the Master, were also guests that night, and the dinner surpassed itself in excellence, the sherry and port being priceless. After the port had been well circulated, Mr. Nottidge thus addressed the M.F.H. :

"Now, Master, what will *you* give me for the grey?"

"Fifteen golden sovereigns," said the Master.

"Come, Master, come!" was the reply. "Have another glass of port, Master, have another glass of port! It's not the price of the horse's ears."

The Master *did* have another glass of port, and so did they all, another bottle having been carefully nursed on its way from the cellar. This settled the sale of the grey, but not in the manner the host no doubt expected. The Master, who never overbid himself, only added a fiver to his original offer, and bought the grey for £20. The horse turned out 'a topper,' and after he had ridden him for three

seasons, Harry Lowndes sold him at a profit of no less than £100. Many good yarns were told at this dinner; and Mr. Nottidge, who had once owned a famous horse called 'Shark,' insisted on trying to illustrate to his guests how he once fell over a huge oxer, by standing on his head in the middle of the room!

Apropos of sportsmen and port, Harry Lowndes once asked the late Mr. Tom Parrington, a famous Yorkshire sportsman, ex-M.F.H. and father of hound and agricultural shows, what he thought of a certain young M.F.H. who had succeeded his father as head of the family pack.

"Not much," replied Mr. Parrington. "He is only a one-bottle man—he'll never make a two-bottle man if he lives to be as old as I am." Mr. P. lived to be over ninety, and drank at least one bottle every night almost to the week of his death, and always had a glass of gin and treacle as a 'night-cap.' He once told the editor that it was the chase, aided by port and the weird night-cap, which, combined, had made him live so long. The East Kent M.F.H. once told a lady that he always drank two bottles of black strap every day of his life.

"What, all alone?" exclaimed the lady, in a surprised tone.

"No," said the M.F.H., "I always have a bottle of sherry afterwards to keep it company."

The Rev. Mr. Byron was another of the old school, and a contemporary of Mr. Nottidge's. He was a very fine man to hounds, always going as straight as

a gun-barrel, allowing nothing to turn him. Few men could catch him across country, despite his seventy years. In addition to his love of the chase he was a first-class cricketer, and played for the county of Kent.

Another enthusiastic sporting cleric was the Rev. Hyde Smith, who for years went straight to hounds. He was a fine horseman, a good judge of a horse, a first-rate shot and also useful with his fists. A story is told of a day when the East Kent had a capital run, and marked their fox to ground in a disused, overgrown chalk-pit. The Master was in the pit holloaing over the earth, and feeling thirsty (perhaps not an uncommon complaint with him), he told the youth standing by to go up to the first gentleman he saw with a flask and tell him the Master was sorely in need of it. The youth set out on his errand of mercy, and the first Nimrod he saw with a pocket pistol happened to be Parson Hyde Smith, who rather reluctantly handed over his flask, impressing on the youth that he did so conditionally upon "Mr. Lowndes not finishing the lot." However, the youth, thinking the Master looked rather severe, delivered the flask but not the message. H. S. L., having no idea to whom the flask belonged, emptied it forthwith and returned it to the boy. On leaving the chalk-pit, the first man the Master encountered was his reverence. "Have you had a drink, Master?" he asked.

"No," was the reply. "Have you got a flask?" "Yes," said his reverence, "but *you* have got the contents."

Mr. Hyde Smith had a very nasty fall, which practically finished his hunting career. He and the Master were riding across the Vale, with hounds in full cry after a Westwood fox which had taken to the valley. The pace was a cracker, and whilst negotiating a brook his reverence had a desperate fall. He was able, however, to get on to his feet just as the Rev. Mr. Palmer (another hard-riding parson) came up, who dismounted to give what help he could. Poor old Mr. Hyde Smith, not knowing what he was doing, and being thoroughly dazed, squared up to Mr. Palmer, and got in his left to such purpose that he smashed up his brother cleric's top hat. Others had now come up, and after a time, thinking Mr. Hyde Smith was fit to ride home, started him on his way. Unfortunately, this was far from the case, for he became giddy, fell off his horse and was found unconscious by the roadside and taken home. For six weeks he remained practically unconscious, suffering from bad concussion, from which he never fully recovered, though able later occasionally to ride a quiet pony to see hounds thrown into covert.

Mr. Barr was yet another good parson who enjoyed days with the East Kent, as does Mr. Dunn, who follows on foot, and is a sportsman all over, and always has a stirrup-cup ready when hounds are passing by.

Yet another 'gentleman in black,' who is an all-round sportsman and mighty Nimrod, is the Rev. Frank Timins, who hunts regularly with fox, harriers, stag and drag, and generally rides a horse in

the Hunt point-to-points. He also drives a coach during the summer, and is a keen cricketer.

There was once a huntsman with the Hurworth during the late Mr. W. Forbes' long *régime* who was given to throwing his tongue a bit if the field pressed hounds on a bad scenting day. On one occasion the late Master (who rather prided himself on his flow of language), called the huntsman up and said: "In future you will understand that cursing the field is a privilege I reserve to myself in the Hurworth country—I've been at it longer than you and can do it more effectually." The present East Kent M.F.H. has never been charged with using 'honeyed words' when the occasion demanded a reproof, and sometimes he let himself in for well-merited rebuke from his reverend friends in the hunting-field. The following little story, however, illustrates the magnanimity of both scarlet and black. The Master, having run a fox into a wood, heard someone halloaing him away at the far end. He soon had his hounds out, as, being a bad scenting day, he was most anxious to get on better terms with his fox. However, on arriving at the point from which the holloa had come there was no sign of anyone. No doubt it was some irresponsible person who had holloa'd, and seeing the M.F.H. coming in response, had bolted to avoid the day of wrath. The Master was in a towering rage, and meeting a clergyman and a parishioner, without realising who they were, he unburdened his soul to them. His reverence reported

the incident by letter to the Lord of the Manor, who forwarded it on to the Master. The letter stated that while the cleric was consulting his head-parishioner on a very religious matter, Mr. Selby Lowndes had ridden up and used worse language than any East End cabman, however proficient, could have employed, and that the cleric was both scandalised and much pained. The Master, though he may 'twitter' in the hunting-field, does so from sheer keenness to provide sport for everyone, never bears the slightest malice, and has always been ready to apologise if he by any chance hurt anyone's feelings. So in this case he immediately wrote to the offended cleric expressing great regret, and received the following in reply by the next post:

DEAR MR. LOWNDES,—I forget all, I forgive all. Perhaps my hasty letter to —— was caused from the fact that when you saluted me I was talking to a parishioner on a religious matter. Now for a clerical lecture! We like you very much in this neighbourhood, and would do anything to add to your enjoyment in connection with hunting, but oh, in return may we ask you to keep 'the unruly member' under proper control, and then we shall hold you up as the most popular Master of the E.K.H., being second to none in England. I feel I must apologise for all this, but, then, a parson must have his say—he means well, poor fellow! With every good wish, etc.

On another occasion, when the East Kent M.F.H. was very emphatically laying down the law out hunting, he was called to order by a reverend friend of his regarding his language. The Master spontaneously replied: "Oh, your reverence,

you preach and I swear, but *neither of us cares a damn*!"

The Master always extends the heartiest welcome to hunting parsons, and loves to see them out. He is constantly heard to state that some of his best friends and the truest sportsmen he has ever met have been in orders, and many a time has he repeated the argument of an old hunting divine when the subject of the propriety of parsons hunting has been under discussion. The cleric in question had been attacked for his devotion to fox-hunting, and replied: "I only wish my hours of recreation had all been spent as happily and innocently as in the hunting-field; but point out to me the moral turpitude of hunting and I'll never follow a hound again."

Reference to hunting clerics recalls a story. One day the Master was judging at Whitchurch Horse Show, and when lunch-time arrived an old farmer named Jones sat down and began feeding before grace was said. The parson deputed to invoke a blessing noticed this, and when the time came for grace said: "For what we are going to receive, and for what Mr. Jones has had already, may the Lord make us truly thankful."

The following story is related of one of the sporting parsons who hunted with the East Kent Hounds, Mr. Dickens by name, who died some years ago. In the course of a run he came across a brother cleric trying to creep through a high fence. As Mr. Dickens galloped by he called out: "Oh, Brother

Parson, you will never jump the gates of Heaven—though you might crawl under!" Mr. Dickens was asked one day how he liked a certain horse, and replied: "I likes neither his hocks nor his hass nor anything helse that is his."

The Rev. 'Jimmy' Hallett, who lived at Waltham, was quite a character. One summer there was an awful drought in Kent, and Waltham village, standing a bit high, suffered terribly, water being desperately scarce. One Sunday, on his way to church, Mr. Hallett met one of his parishioners, Bridget by name, and seeing he was going in the opposite direction to the church, asked: "Well, Mr. Bridget, are you not going to church?" "No," replied Bridget, "I am going to the 'Lord Nelson' to get a pint of beer to shave with."

Another local clerical anecdote is told of a well-known parson, the Rev. Mr. Baily, who had a child when he was ninety-two years of age. Someone chalked up on his front door the following morning: "Good old Joe; 92, not out."

The Rev. ——, whose horse looked very staring in his coat, asked the Master for a remedy. H. S. L. replied, "Linseed oil, your reverence; he looks as if you had fed him on chopped sermons!"

Having got to the after-dinner stage of 'That reminds me,' perhaps the following chestnut may be new to some: The Bishop of —— once remonstrated with one of the parsons in his diocese for going out hunting. The latter, in self-defence, said:

"But, my Lord, I saw you were at the State Ball the other night."

"Perhaps I was," replied the prelate. "But I can assure you I was never in the same room as the dancing."

"And I can assure you, my Lord, I am never in the same field as the hounds!" was the retort.

The Rev. ——, with whom Harry Lowndes was lunching one day, happened to say to his wife: "Mary, I am afraid the old white mare will never be able to hunt again; we must put her to the stud." Shortly after Mary was conversing with her husband about their little daughter's old nurse, and decided that she was too old, and must go, when a small voice from under the table was heard: "Oh, mother, please don't send dear old Nanny away. Why not do the same with her as the old mare?" The little daughter had been listening to the conversation, and disliking the idea of her old nurse going away, thought she had discovered an excellent way out of the difficulty.

In concluding this chapter on hunting parsons, it is interesting to recall that the East Kent M.F.H.'s father had four good livings in his gift—one of them with £800 a year—and was most anxious H. S. L. should enter the Church. The idea did not appeal to the Master, however, who always affirmed that "breeding will tell" and that there was much more hunting than ecclesiastical blood in his veins, though he sees no good reason why the twain should

not commingle with complete compatibility. This recalls a final anecdote told of that greatest of all hunting parsons—the late Rev. 'Jack' Russell. Parson Russell once visited a dying gamekeeper, who asked him if he thought there was any chance of him reaching heaven. "Have you ever flirted with any man's wife?" asked the Rev. Jack. The keeper pleaded guilty. "Have you ever shot a fox?" continued the cleric. "Never!" said the man emphatically. "Then there's *every* chance of your going to heaven," was the reassuring reply.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MASTER'S HORSES AND TERRIERS, AND A WORD ON BADGER-DIGGING

FROM his earliest days the Master of the East Kent heard his father repeatedly delivering himself of the advice: "A Master of Hounds possessed of a limited income must contrive to keep his money together by selling his horses well." Mr. H. S. Lowndes has succeeded in carrying out this dictum, and has been aided therein by sound judgment and ability to 'make' horses and cure faults when others have failed. Like a Yorkshireman, when he sees a man pass on horseback his eyes are first on the horse and then on the rider. He *has* an eye for a horse, too, and possesses the ability—lacking in many real good judges—of picking out the best animals from a number when running out and in the rough. Throughout his career he has always relied on his own judgment entirely when buying, and never has a horse 'veted.' He never asks to see them jumped, but rides them himself in their walk, trot and gallop, and decides what they are and can be made. Latterly he has bought nearly all his horses from Messrs. Drage, Bob Whurr, the late James Darrell, and Stokes, and the scores of horses

he has had from these dealers have, with few exceptions, all turned out most advantageously when sold, after he has ridden and hunted hounds on them for a season. Fond of his animals as he is, he makes no favourites and sells whenever an opportunity comes in his way. Poor Jimmy Darrell and Stokes always used to say they could sell him a horse in a quarter the time it took them to complete a bargain with anybody else, and that when once sold, they never heard any complaints or 'rue-bargains,' as they say in Yorkshire. The Master always maintains he has had the best possible treatment from dealers, despite all the strictures passed on them. In addition to those already named, he has had occasional deals with Mr. Buckland, of Ashford, and others. The Master keeps all his horses at the kennels at Elham, and thither on one occasion came a Frenchman. He bought two horses, and took them to France. A few months later he wrote, stating 'he had always thought an English M.F.H. an honourable man,' etc., etc., and then went on to accuse the Master of having sold him a horse with a broken knee, and having glued some hair on! On making inquiries, it turned out that the purchaser's groom had let down the horse and tried to conceal the fact.

The Master has never refused a bad-tempered horse if he was the right stamp, and almost without exception, when he has ridden them for a season they have given up their evil ways. These horses

with 'bad habits' have included roarers, runaways, some given to going 'tail first,' besides kickers and real rogues. One of the latter type was a grey show horse bought from Mr. Drage. He was a winner of many prizes, but developed into a runaway in the show ring. At Reigate Show, on one occasion, he carried one of the judges round and round the ring as if he had discovered the secret of perpetual motion and revelled in it. Drage offered the horse to the Master cheap, and after H. S. L. had seen him gallop (which he did by promptly running away with Drage's man), he bought him and took him home. During the summer he sent him to exercise regularly with the hounds, cub-hunted him, and had him out at the opening meet, where the horse was immensely admired, and sold for a high price to a Miss Davidson, who rode him for years after in the Ludlow country.

The same lady bought another good hunter the Master's second horseman was riding and gave a useful price for him. During the day she lamed her own horse, and so offered the Master an extra fiver to take the newly purchased one there and then, which request was at once complied with.

Another grey horse the Master bought was a winner of the Dublin Show high wall jump. This animal he sold to a man who was buying show 'leppers' for a millionaire. The horse was jumped at a show, but not being quite what was expected, was returned to the kennels as unsound. The Master

was away on his arrival, and the stud groom, in complete ignorance of the circumstances, foolishly took the horse in and blistered him. When the Master arrived home he was very irate and wrote to the purchaser disputing his right to return the horse, which was perfectly sound though it had become very hot in the show ring. The purchaser had exercised ownership by jumping the horse in his own name, so the Master opened a leisurely correspondence, and in a fortnight's time, after several letters had passed, mentioned the fact of the horse having been jumped at a certain show. The purchaser was much taken aback at the M.F.H. knowing this; and as the blister had in the meantime worn off (to which end the Master had prolonged the correspondence), the horse was returned to the purchaser without further trouble.

On one occasion, whilst the Master was buying a horse from Mr. Funnell, the latter's son came on the scene. "Let me introduce you to my son, Master," said the dealer, adding, "An excellent lad—wouldn't tell a lie for ever so much, so no damned use for our trade, Master."

The M.F.H. once bought a dun mare from Drage for £75. Another customer had promised to come and see this mare, but failed to put in an appearance. Just as the Master had concluded the deal, however, the other customer walked into the yard. The M.F.H. apologised for having forestalled him, but added that if he was really keen on having her he

would sacrifice his purchase for £120. The man *was* keen, and closed with the offer. Harry Lowndes, telling the story afterwards to a friend, remarked; "I am too kind-hearted; I ought to have asked £150."

The Master sold a number of good hunters to the soldiers who hunted with him and other friends. Many of these have been horses with wills of their own when he bought them, but gave the greatest satisfaction after being knocked into shape at the kennels. Folk often expressed surprise at the condition of the East Kent horses in view of the amount of work they have had to do right up to the end of each season. The Hunt stud-groom in the Master's early years in East Kent was a queer fellow, particularly diminutive in stature. The Master said to him one morning: "Hullo, Masters; you seem to have grown smaller than ever." "No, sir, I have just had my hair cut," was the reply.

The Master has occasionally bought horses at Tattersall's, but prefers dealers. When buying horses, he often says he looks for animals "with the neck and shoulders of a housemaid and the quarters of a cook." He once bought a real flash-looking grey at Tattersall's for £50, five years old and sound. The first whipper-in rode him all the season, but the Master, finding that his 'crab' was that he had no heart, sent him up with some others to Tattersall's at the end of the season, where he was sold to a dealer for £85. The dealer, however, soon discovered his

failing and returned him to Tattersall's as 'unsound in wind.' But the Master employed the best vet. at Tatt.'s, who certified him sound in wind. "This trick of returning horses they don't like as 'whistlers' after buying them is a common one with small dealers at repositories," wrote the Master in his journal at the time. "Many an owner gets taken in in this way. He is disgusted to think he has made a mistake and his horse really *is* a 'whistler,' and probably takes half what the dealer gave in the first place." In the case mentioned, however, the biter was bit; and instead of the horse costing him £85 he must have been lucky if after paying both vets. and carriage of horse backward and forward, he got off with less than £100.

A black mare bought by the Master from Mr. Buckland, of Ashford, had a wide reputation as 'a savage.' When Mr. Lowndes bought her she was notoriously unmanageable. She started her career at Mr. Buckland's by kicking his rough-rider through the stable door, and was so savage that she was turned out to grass. H. S. L. bought her for £25. It took five men to shoe her, and when delivered by Mr. Buckland's man, he declined to take her into the stable. One of the Master's grooms volunteered to do so, but the mare 'savaged' him, got him down, and had to be kept off with pitchforks ere he could escape. After this none of the men would go near her, so her food was thrown in from the next stall.

Harry Lowndes was away shooting at the time, and on his arrival home he set to work to tackle her, employing some of the tricks he had learned in the Argentine. He put a noose round her neck and nearly throttled her, and then pulled her out by force from the stable. Then he lassoed her hind legs, and eventually hobbled her and threw her. The mare's squeals could be heard for miles. She was then saddled and ridden and during the operations a false side to her stall was fixed up, which gave her no room to savage anyone. This partition was made to be moved easily after the mare was in her stall and was again run alongside of her when she was to be tackled. She was always groomed outside for the first six months and gradually got more tractable. When mounted she was quite amenable, but mounting was the difficulty. She could, in the words of her owner, " kick a fly's eye out, and bite as quick as thought." Jack Grant, first whipper-in, when in the saddle was very fond of her. After two years she became as docile as a kitten. The Master's brother-in-law, the hon. secretary of the Hunt, bought her and rode her regularly. In fact, she taught him to hunt.

The Master used to sell horses unseen to the late Mr. J. Darrell of Ayton (Scarborough), and never on any occasion was there a word of disagreement as to the figure to be put on them.

The following is a list of the Hunt horses

sold during Mr. Lowndes' Mastership in East Kent :

Name	Cost	Seasons Ridden	Sold For
The Liar	£30	2	£60
Tewkesbury	£25	4	£50
Grey Friar	£35	5	£58
Xerxes	£25	3	£30
Whiskey	£53	1	£55
Bay Blue	given	2	£45
Silver Wedding	£30	4	£52
Gay Lad	£40	2	£100
Rocket	£50	1	£120
Red Cloud	£30	1	£45
Grey Fox	£5	3	£80
Dick Turpin	£55	2	£105
Gentleman Joe	£20	7	£100
Bonnety Bob	£50	5	£160
Blue Roach	£30	4	£75
Harkaway	£30	2	£75
B.P.	£20	5	£60
Cocktail	£45	3	£70
The Clipper	£35	3	£80
Lady	£20	1	£55
Betty	£20	half	£45
Grey Male	£90	1	£115
Gratitude	£85	1	£105
Blackguard	£30	2	£55
Lady B.	£20	1	£45
Whiskey Jim	£60	2	£100
Sambo	£65	1	£80
Trappist	£45	1	£60
Forester	£65	3	£100
Big Ben	£20	1	£50
Dinah	£12	1	£40
Blacklock	£55	2	£80
Hercules	£11	2	£150
Bill Bailey	£60	3	£85
Walfud	£64	3	£75
Sir Harry	£130	2	£150

Name	Cost	Seasons Ridden	Sold For
Multum	£75	3	£100
Drage	£40	1	£70
John Peel	£72	3	£120
Grey Tick	£100	1	£125
Lord Bob	£60	3	£105
Tickham	£50	1	£85
The Major	£90	2	£110
Sutherland	£75	2	£100
The Nun	£75	2	£100
Pytchley	£64	1	£75
Dandy	£100	2	£125
Whurr	£60	1	£100
Bobbie	£75	1	£105
Ned	£35	2	£50

16 horses taken during the war.

Chest	£72	–	£65
Thomas	£60	–	£70
Stokes I	£65	–	£70
Stokes II	£65	1	£70
Walchorn	£40	4	£70
Antonio	£75	5	£70
Flashlight	£50	2	£50
Bendigo	£60	3	£65
Chest Cot	£15	1	£35
Blackman	£35	2	£50
Bay	£60	3	£70
Jim II	£75	1	£70
Punch	£60	4	£70
Mary	£40	2	£55
Arthe	£63	1	£70
Stokes III	£65	1	£70
James Pigg	£30	–	£45
Adisham	£40	1	£50
Big Knee	£100	2	£130
Pat II	£80	3	£130
Clown	£100	2	£125
Sam	£50	2	£75
Bendigo II	£30	2	£50

Name	Cost	Seasons Ridden	Sold For
Gaylad	£125	2	£100
Putloe	£66	4	£84
Dandy	£55	4	£75
First Knight	£35	1	£85
Molly	£20	–	£30
Mr. A.	£35	1	£75
Bonnety III	£70	2	£75
Bishop	£100	4	£160
Grey Plover	£100	2	£200
Grey Tick	£76	–	£200
B.B.	£15	2	£70
Big Ben	£74	1	£200
Ruddy Glow	£40	3	£100
Cork	£52	–	£120
Glen Gower	£63	–	£70
Grey Plover	£100	–	£200
Mr. A.	£35	–	£75
Dandy II	£55	–	£70
Goldfinch	£15	–	£85
Greystone II	£70	–	£200
Bishop	£100	–	£160
Big Ben II	£65	–	£210
Dutchman	£45	–	£200
Silver Top	£35	–	£80
Bonnet III	£72	–	£85
The Copper	£35	–	£70
Putloe	£60	–	£84
Gaylad II	£125	–	£150
Grinstead	£40	–	£75
Romford	£60	–	£130
Sponge	£90	–	£130

TERRIERS AND BADGERS

Early in his hunting career the East Kent M.F.H. bred terriers for work—terriers which would go to ground and bolt a fox rather than the tall show-bench breeds. In the unstoppable Bilsdale country,

with its countless hillside earths, Mr. Lowndes found how essential a few good terriers were as an appendage to the best pack of hounds in the world. On going into East Kent—'a hollow country'—fresh evidence was provided of this necessity, and he continued to breed terriers with renewed zest. East Kent abounds in badgers, and the Master always held, and rightly so—that the supreme test of a terrier is his ability to hold his own with 'brock.' During a long and wide experience of badgers, the editor of this volume could count on the fingers of one hand the terriers he has seen which could actually *draw* a badger, though it is claimed by scores of terrier owners that they possess dogs which will do this. This glib assertion is, more often than not, found unsupportable in fact when it comes to a trial. Mr. Lowndes knows this full well, and enters some thoughts on the subject in one of his journals which are worth reproducing here. He writes:

A badger is the hardest fighting beast a terrier has to face underground. Punishment the terrier must be prepared to take, however cautious and clever he may be. A good terrier must throw his tongue to guide the diggers where to sink down a trench. The bite of a fox is nothing compared to that of a badger, and at times my terriers get very badly mauled, and take weeks before they heal up. The wounds badgers inflict are nearly always very disfiguring. I have proved that badgers have killed fox cubs, besides opening up fresh earths all over the country, thereby saving many a beaten fox which hounds deserved, and would otherwise have secured, so I haven't spared them, though I admire them. In fifteen years I killed and bagged by digging (and a few during hunting) 180 full-grown

badgers, including 6 white ones (albinos). I have used both rough and smooth terriers, bred entirely for work, looks always being a secondary consideration with me. For twenty-five years I have seldom gone outside for blood, except to Mr. Arthur Jones, M.F.H. and M.O.H., of the Worcestershire, of whose terriers I have always been an admirer. Some people imagine badger-digging makes terriers too hard, but this, I contend, is a mistake. I maintain just the opposite is the result, as it makes them more cautious, and to lay and throw their tongues and not take too many liberties. In my opinion, sporting and working terriers are non-existent on the show-bench, and I hope it will always remain so. The so-called working show-terrier is a soft, misshapen devil, too big to be of any use to go to ground, and the so-called ' punishing head ' is ridiculous. The mere fact of the badger and otter, the two most powerful punishing animals to be found, both having short heads, contradicts this fallacy. I do not think anyone could combine the looks necessary for the show-bench and the working qualities in any breed of terriers. Let ladies make pets of their dogs, and the show-bench man breed fox-terriers to a greyhound or Clumber type if they like. They are not doing anyone any harm, after all ; they are very little worse than the present type of M.F.H.'s, who only breed for show, and have done the same as the show-terrier man—*sacrificed everything for looks.* It is open to dispute whether rough-haired or smooth-haired terriers are the harder. I think there is very little difference.

Many are the badger-digs which have taken place with the Master's terriers during the last twenty odd years, special badger-cards being sent out as to meet and time. On one occasion the Master had the following letter from Sir Arthur Markham, of Beachborough Park :

My Dear Selby Lowndes,—Could you arrange to have a badger-dig at Beachborough any day next week except

Wednesday? The Old Poacher is very anxious to have one. On Wednesday George has a Cabinet meeting which he must attend. If you could arrange this for me I should be very much obliged to you, and doubtless Captain Sutton and others would join. Dadds would be able to tell you the best place to dig. He says there are four vixens working about Beachborough, so one would have to be careful not to disturb them. I have no doubt that the 11th Hussars would send men to dig, and so would the 60th Rifles. However, as to this point, I am sure you will be able to make arrangements. If you are passing Beachborough, would you go in and see George and arrange what day is most convenient to yourself and him?

Yours etc.,

ARTHUR B. MARKHAM.

Sir Arthur Markham had kindly lent his house, Beachborough Park, to the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George.

The dig was arranged accordingly on a day suitable, Mr. Lloyd George providing an excellent lunch for all comers—some thirty sportsmen in all. The dig took place in the Oak Bank at Beachborough, the Master bringing eight of his best terriers and the officers of the 11th Hussars and 60th Rifles having with them several terriers to be entered.

Mr. Lloyd George and his son and daughter were all present, and a detective—all very much interested in the proceedings. A great dig took place, several trenches ten and twelve feet deep having to be cut during operations. The terriers worked well. Clinker (by whom half the dogs in the district were sired, and who would fight a red-hot poker till it became cold a great, passionate, fighting savage

with only one answer to every argument, "Fight") and old Nell lay at their badger for two hours before coming out to be relieved. Jim and Snip, two undefeated terriers, after doing their share for nearly another two hours, enabled the diggers to get in touch with what proved to be two fine specimens. Punch and Gip kept them busy till the Master could get within reach to 'tail' them. The Chancellor and his family grew more and more excited, until the Master in a twinkling tailed the nearest badger, and with a 'who—whoop' held him up to the spectators before bagging him. The day ended with an adjournment to Beachborough House, where everyone partook of the Chancellor's hospitality.

The Master presented Mrs. Lloyd George with one of the badgers, to be set up at Rowland Ward's in memory of their first badger dig. The two badgers weighed 29 lbs. and 32 lbs. respectively. He took the opportunity, when meeting the Chancellor, to tackle him about hound licences, grumbling that M.F.H.'s had to pay the same as for ordinary dogs, instead of so much for a pack!

Among other celebrated terriers of the Master's, beside Clinker, Nell, Snip and Gip, were Punch I and Punch II, Nettle, Jack, Jean, Jim I and Jim II, Judy, Vixen, Gip II, Grimy and Nipper. He always had a team of at least a dozen to fifteen terriers, and bred a great many more, some of which were sent as far as New York. The whole of his stock of smooth-haired terriers were descendants of Punch

I, the best terrier and friend, the Master would tell you, he ever had. He lasted many years, and bolted hundreds of foxes in his time. He was with the Master in Somerset, and there got his leg broken out hunting. His owner carried him fifteen miles home on his horse, and he recovered so completely as to go up to Yorkshire with the family and run with the Bilsdale three years. After seven years in Kent, the old dog died in the summer of 1904, full of years and honour. The Master felt his death terribly, and pasted in his journal is the following —a letter from a friend commiserating with him:

My Dear Henry,—I am exceedingly sorry to hear about poor old Punch, and I can fully appreciate what your feelings are like. I have often felt the same when I have had to part with an old hound who has done his duty faithfully for years, and often got me out of a difficulty in the field, when the eyes of the public were looking on—all too ready to criticise and find fault. There is something wonderful in the friendship of a dog—different from human friends; for his fidelity never alters, and keeps on the same through rough and smooth.

Old Punch was more than that even, for he was your fireside friend too, and more than that even, for he has been by your side to help you since you took to fox-hounds, and all your recollections of the early days of your career as M.F.H. will be associated with him. Keenly as you feel the wrench in having to part, there must always be a feeling of comfort and happiness in thinking of the successful days put in together. I know myself that often when troubles and worries arise I can take comfort in thinking over the past and all those fine associations which are the help and stay of the genuine fox-hunter—feelings too deep and sacred even to be mentioned except to a friend like you.

One thing I am thankful for—he did not suffer much

pain. I was afraid, with that rupture, that his death would be a torture; it is a blessing he was spared that. I am glad to have had his photo before he died.

Ever yours, T. J. Y.

The following report of an extraordinary day's ratting appeared in *The Field*:

Mr. H. W. Selby Lowndes, on Thursday last, with ten of his terriers, by the invitation of Mr. Quested, The Firs, Cheriton, had a good day's ratting; in three and a half hours no less than 376 full-grown rats were killed. The company present included Mr. and Mrs. Quested and party, Mr. Harries, secretary of the E.K.H., and officers from the 60th Rifles and 9th Lancers. On two consecutive days previously 325 and 320 rats were killed. This, in all probability, constitutes a record.

A further account states that with five terriers (three entered and two unentered) 100 rats were killed in 57 minutes, and 197 in 1 hour and 25 minutes; the total for four days being no less than 1,218 full-grown rats.

There have been several 'May Day rattings' held at the same place during the last twenty years. On these occasions no ferrets were used. Operations were centred on a refuse-heap of some thousands of tons. Four men were employed with long iron rods and spades, who started from the top of the heap and probed and dug downwards, bolting the rats in all directions.

Among the many badger-digs arranged by the Master the following are worth copying from his journal:

January, 1904.—Met at Lythorne; had a record day. Found a colony of badgers in Lythorne chalk-pit. Dug all day and bagged no less than 5 full-grown badgers—3 boars and 2 sows weighing 38, 35, 31, 29, and 27 lbs. respectively. Used ten terriers during the day. Several severely punished.

From *The Field*:

March, 1906.—Another big day badger digging on a large scale has been carried out by Mr. H. W. Selby Lowndes in East Kent last week. The result of a seven and a half hours' dig produced no less than three old badgers (two boars and a sow) and four young ones, presumably, as far as Mr. Selby Lowndes could judge, about three days old. The sow and young ones were put into a large vat, and the mother brought them up safely; they did not open their eyes for six weeks, which seems longer by far than any other animals take. The old one is now quite quiet and can be handled.

From the Master's journal, February 15th, 1908:

The result of a dig from 9.30 a.m. till 8.15 p.m. was 3 badgers bagged and a very mangy dog fox, which we turned down and killed with the terriers. On this occasion Clinker drew a badger out by himself, the only instance I remember, or have ever heard of, of a single dog doing so. Weight, 36 lbs.

Another memorable day was when the 60th Rifles asked the Master to have a dig on the camp near Shorncliffe. The 60th entertained all comers at the earth while the dig was proceeding. Relays of Tommies helped in the digging, and were most useful, and enjoyed the fun. They started at ten o'clock, and relays worked during lunch. The journal entry concludes:

After a dig lasting till 10.30 at night a fine badger was produced by lamplight weighing 40 lbs. The terriers were beat, so I crawled into the tunnel and bagged him, after the most severe day I remember.

Another entry in the Master's journal runs :

I see it is recorded in *The Field* that in eleven years' badger-digging someone found 5 out of 128 badgers bagged were mangy, so that it is not by any means so certain that they are useful in clearing out earths for foxes.

Though this work essentially contains the views of Mr. H. W. Selby Lowndes on matters venatic rather than those of the editor, perhaps the latter may be allowed to add that the opinions regarding badgers held by the Master of the East Kent are opposed to those of many who have studied 'brock' for long, and amongst the number the editor of this work. In a brochure by Sir Alfred Pease, Bart., and the editor, the question of the utility of badgers in a hunting country, and especially as an antidote to mange, is dispassionately discussed, and much evidence examined and sifted. We found ourselves bound to come to the conclusion found on p. 21[1] of that work as follows :

Fox-hunters in many parts of England still regard badgers as inimical to foxes ; though in some hunting countries they have been tolerated and even encouraged, as being, on the whole, of more use than danger to foxes. I have heard of (but never seen) a badger with mange, but only in a country where foxes had been long affected with the most

[1] *The Life and Habits of the Badger*, by J. Fairfax-Blakeborough and Sir A. E. Pease, Bart. (out of print).

virulent forms of this horrible disease. That badgers are a nuisance to earth-stoppers, I well believe, but I have yet to be convinced that there is any superior or cleanly home for a fox than that which badgers will construct for him. I believe that if every artificial earth in England had been a badger's the curse of mange amongst foxes would never have been known.

Be it said that the Master of the East Kent does not hold isolated views with regard to the value or otherwise of badgers in hunting countries. He has a profound admiration for the courage and gameness of 'brock'; is the last one in the world to see badgers extinct, and sees to it that all the 'digs' in his country are conducted in a thoroughly sporting manner. This is what one would natually expect.

In conclusion it is a happy ending to the published story—for it is hoped that there are yet many more chapters in the womb of the future yet to be added—to record that sport during the season 1925–6 was the best enjoyed for some years. The official return reads as follows:

Average sport, very good; scent above the average; hunting days, 70; stopped by frost, etc., three weeks; foxes killed, 15½ brace; run to ground 9½ brace; April 6th was the last day. The season was a good one, and many excellent hunts took place. The going was deep, which suits the country. Hounds ran away from horses on several occasions.

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